

JOURNAL

**of the central
mississippi valley**

**AMERICAN
STUDIES**
association

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

1961

PERIODICAL
READING ROOM

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CMVASA BULLETIN..... BACK COVER

VOLUME TWO

SPRING, 1961

NUMBER ONE

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS -- LAWRENCE, KANSAS



JOURNAL OF THE
CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI VALLEY
AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

An interdisciplinary journal sponsored jointly by The Central Mississippi
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STEPHEN CRANE AND THE DRAMA OF TRANSITION

ROBERT W. SCHNEIDER

American intellectual historians have consistently designated the period from 1865-1917 as the era during which Americans in nearly all fields lost their religious orientation. Certainly no one would deny that it was a period that experienced a growth in secularism and materialism. Traditional Christian dogmas came in conflict with the new scientific theories of evolution at the same time that urbanization and immigration presented American churches with their most severe institutional problems. Add to this the apparent absorption of the American people in an unmitigated pursuit of material advantages, and one has the basis for a revolution in religious thinking on the part of the whole population.

Most historians have recognized, however, that popular opinion did not stray far from the tenets of traditional Christianity, despite the fact that religion was apparently playing a less important part in their daily lives. It was the intellectuals, not the men in the street, who were said to have changed their basic orientation. Under the impact of evolutionary theories and amid the confusion engendered by an industrializing America, the thinking segment of the population supposedly abandoned their religious backgrounds for the new cult of science and matter-of-fact knowledge.

This change from a religious to a secular, scientific orientation was, however, only one side of the revolution that is credited with bringing about a basic transformation in the thinking of the intellectual class during the period 1865-1917. The other side of this transformation was the change from a belief in the free will of man to a philosophy of determinism. A basic tenet of the American creed had been a faith in the freedom and ability of the individual to live his life apart from the controlling forces of institutions, traditions, predestination, and cosmic forces.¹ Further than this, Americans had insisted that man was also creative--that he could alter his society in the light of human reason.

This American creed of the free individual was being challenged in the post-Civil War period by many of the same forces that threatened orthodox Christianity--industrialization, the development of the corporation, urbanization, and the scientific theories of evolution. Industrialization and urbanization provided a challenge to traditional values; evolution seemed to provide a substitute for those values. As formulated by Herbert Spencer, the

doctrine of evolution promised an automatic progress which would occur without man's assistance.

The literary manifestation of this dual revolution is commonly called naturalism. Stimulated by the science of Darwin, the sociology of Spencer, and the novels of Emile Zola, American writers supposedly turned from religion to science, from free will to determinism. This literary naturalism could be either pessimistic or optimistic, so long as it was deterministic.

It is the opinion of this writer that, while these generalizations about the changes from a religious to a scientific orientation, and from a belief in the concept of the free individual to an acceptance of some form of determinism, may point up the most significant changes in American thinking, they simplify to the point of distortion the American climate of opinion during these years. The drama of the fin-de-siècle situation arises not from a simple change in philosophic orientation, but from the tensions in the human mind that arise from a commitment to the past as well as to the future.

One group of intellectuals that historians have tended to show as simple converts to Darwinism are the Progressive social scientists: Herbert Croly, Charles H. Cooley, Henry D. Lloyd, Richard T. Ely and Thorstein Veblen. But Professor David W. Noble has demonstrated that such a generalization is a complete distortion. In the first place, by no means did they desert the traditional commitment to religion. Rather, according to Professor Noble, during the early years of the twentieth century they developed an enthusiasm that found expression in the hope of a spiritual salvation within the context of the existing secular environment, a resurgence of social solidarity that was firmly based in a new religion of humanity. Scientific theories were used as an explanation for the faith of these social thinkers in the triumph of goals which they received or formulated, not on the basis of matter-of-fact knowledge, but on the strength of a basically religious faith.²

Nor did they desert the traditional notions of the free individual and man-made progress for a philosophy of determinism. They argued that man, the natural man, was inherently good, rational, unselfish, and creative. This natural man had been corrupted by historical society, but this historical society was itself being destroyed by the forces of industrialism which were freeing man to reorder society in the light of human reason. Man had the freedom and creativity to remold his society and would save himself by saving society as a whole. Thus provided with a social environment which was in line with the basic goodness of his own nature, man would progress indefinitely. Further, this progress would be a product of human freedom and creativity, not of blind deterministic forces.³ Thus the social scientists retained a commitment to the traditional concept of the free individual as well as to the basic tenets of a theistic religion. They looked backward to the values of the past at least as much as they looked forward

to the methodology of the future, and it is this dual commitment that provides the drama and excitement in their intellectual biographies.

This drama and excitement naturally reached its peak in the writings of those individuals in whom the tension of a dual commitment was most intense. It is the purpose of this article to illustrate this tension in the writings of one of the most sensitive literary men of his time--Stephen Crane.

The relative uniqueness of Crane lies in his rejection of the prevalent ideas of progress, whether based on deterministic naturalism, as in the writings of Spencer and Zola; directed by the guiding hand of God, as in American Protestantism; or by the free will of the creative individual, as in the Progressive social scientists. This does not mean, however, that Crane was able to free himself totally from traditional ideas about religion and the nature of man, for rejection of progress did not involve a willingness to surrender the traditional human values.

Crane is usually included among the school of emerging writers in the America of 1890-1917 who, influenced by the naturalism of Zola, wrote of man as a product of natural forces who is devoid of free will. But Crane did not accept the notion, entertained by both Spencer and Zola, that the deterministic scheme of nature would lead to ultimate progress. Both God and nature, he felt, were totally indifferent to man and his aspirations. In The Black Riders, for example, he pictured the world as slipping away, while God's back was turned, to make meaningless voyages upon the sea of the universe.⁴ A similar sentiment is expressed in the following poem from War is Kind.

A man said to the universe:

"Sir, I exist!"

"However," replied the universe,

"The fact has not created in me

A sense of obligation."⁵

The indifference of nature to human struggle in this meaningless world is also an important aspect of the short story, "Death and the Child."⁶ This story portrayed people in panic, fleeing from the scene of battle. They seemed to be tumbled forward as if caught in a torrent, one couple even forgetting to gather up their young son in their haste to reach safety. But "the sea, the sky, and the hills combined in their grandeur to term this misery inconsequent."⁷ As he went toward the battle, Peza, the main character, "wondered if the universe took cognizance of him to an important degree," and he finally concluded "that the accidental destruction of an individual, Peza by name, would perhaps be nothing at all."⁸ To the universe it was all very unimportant; nature is indifferent, both to the death of an individual and the misery of the mass.

Life itself is tragic, meaningless, inscrutable. A shepherd named Bill was warned by some Mexicans that they were either going to drive him

off the range or kill him. A stranger rode into Bill's camp and landed in the middle of the battles which took place. Bill was killed, as were several of the Mexicans, and the stranger rode off again.⁹ Where is the meaning, where the moral? There is none. The world is

... a reptile-swarming place,
Peopled, otherwise, with grimaces,
Shrouded above in black impenetrableness.¹⁰

The incompatibility of Crane's indifferent universe with the Progressive determinism of Spencer and Zola is quite obvious. The first path to progress has been rejected.

Scholars have seen from the beginning that much of Crane's apparent sense of the futility of life arose from the young writer's sense of conflict between the religious orthodoxy of his early training and the realities of life as he saw them. This conflict received its most direct expression in The Black Riders. Crane himself was extremely fond of this collection and stated that in it he had tried to set forth his ideas about life in general.¹¹ He was insistent that when the volume appeared in print it should contain all of the poems on religion, even if it meant that the scheduled publishers would refuse to handle the collection at all. He wrote,

I should absolutely refuse to have my poems printed without many of those which you just as absolutely mark "No." It seems to me that you cut all the ethical sense out of the book The ones which refer to God, I believe you condemn altogether. I am obliged to have them in when my book is printed.¹²

It is important for understanding the mind of the young poet that he felt his poems contained "ethical sense," and that, despite the fact that he was, as usual, almost penniless, he was willing to forego publication rather than have that "ethical sense" deleted.

Granville Hicks and Amy Lowell have both noted that one of the main themes of The Black Riders is the rejection of the wrathful God of orthodox, Old Testament Christianity who intervenes in the affairs of man.¹³ Their assertion is supported by a number of the poems. In number twelve, for example, Crane refused to accept a God who visits the sins of the father upon the children, and in number nineteen he rejected both the God who persecutes men and the people who protest when one man strikes back.¹⁴ Similar sentiments are expressed in less violent form in War is Kind, where God is asked if He has ever made a just man. He replies that He has made three; two are dead, and, as for the third, if one listens one will hear the thud of his defeat.¹⁵

The latter poem, like many other works of the young rebel, pictures God as a cold being, indifferent to man rather than an actual oppressor. Crane's most complete rejection of the idea that God intervenes in human affairs was presented in "Man Adrift on a Slim Spar." In this poem a man

was floating in the ocean on the spar of a wrecked ship while wave after wave lashed over him--and God did nothing. Crane was not here denying God the power to act, for he wrote:

The seas are in the hollow of Thy Hand;
Oceans may be turned to a spray
Raining down through the stars

Because of a gesture of pity toward a babe.¹⁶

Yet God did not help the man whose pale hand was sliding from the polished spar. Why? Because "God is cold."¹⁷

If this were the extent of Crane's poetic statements on religion, the critics who portray him as a rebel against religion would be guilty of no more than literary exaggeration. But this is not all, for Crane's rejection of the Old Testament God of the Mountain did not mean that he was able to separate himself from his religious heritage. Van Wyck Brooks was perhaps the first to make a clear distinction between the two Gods that appear in The Black Riders,¹⁸ an insight that was developed by Professor Daniel Hoffman. Hoffman contends that Crane knew little, if anything, of scientific determinism; that on the contrary, he was of an essentially religious nature, inheriting from his father the belief in a merciful, indwelling God.¹⁹

This personal, indwelling deity of Crane's is the God who rises from his throne to embrace the little blade of grass that can think of no noble deeds it has accomplished.²⁰ This God whom Crane acknowledged, as opposed to the wrathful God of orthodoxy, is clearly seen in number fifty-one of The Black Riders.

A man went before a strange God--
The God of many men, sadly wise.
And the Deity thundered loudly,
Fat with rage, and puffing,
"Kneel, mortal, and cringe
And grovel and do homage
To My Particularly Sublime Majesty."
The man fled.

Then the man went to another God--
The god of his inner thoughts.
And this one looked at him
With soft eyes
Lit with infinite comprehension,
And said, "My poor child!"²¹

From this example one can see the tremendous emotional strain that existed in the mind of this young writer, a tension that arose from his dual commitment to the past and to the future. He could not accept the dogmas of orthodox Christianity, but neither could he forget the personal, benevolent, Methodist God of his childhood. Here was no simple rejection of the

old for the new, no switch from a religious to a scientific orientation, but a crisis of the mind, the individual mind, that could not be solved by an intellectual acceptance of new ideas.

It has been suggested here that Crane rejected progressive determinism and orthodox Christianity as paths to progress and human salvation. The only other path that remained was that espoused by the Progressive social scientists who contended that man could progress indefinitely through the exercise of his creative free will. But historians and critics are almost universally agreed that Crane believed man was living in a universe in which man had little freedom of choice.²² To what extent did Crane believe that man was bound by cosmic and social forces? The answer to this question is crucial for an understanding of his dual commitment.

The question of cosmic determinism as opposed to man's free will plays an important part in both The Sullivan County Sketches and "The Blue Hotel," but is dealt with most explicitly and completely in "The Open Boat."²³

Several important aspects of Crane's philosophy are dramatized in this story, but the central question here is whether these men had free will or were simply the victims of fate and an indifferent universe. Crane left little room for doubt about nature's indifference to the individuals involved in this adventure. To the correspondent the tower on the shore represented "the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual. . . . She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent."²⁴

What is man's reaction to a situation such as this? Crane wrote:

When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples.²⁵

In other words, his reactions are defiance and frustration.

But what about the action and logic of the story? Fate undoubtedly landed the first blow by casting these men adrift for no good reason upon the sea. There, faced with the indifference of nature, their primary reaction was rage and frustration. But their next response was action. The captain took command and directed his miniature crew to the door of safety. All of the men acted rationally and effectively to make the best of the given conditions. So men can will, and act according to that will, in a crisis situation.

But willing and acting in the face of a neutral cosmos does not preclude frustration by inscrutable fate. While the others were saved largely by the joint action of the group, the oiler, who had worked hardest and had been the least excitable member of the crew, died on the very brink of safety.

Here, then, is Crane's view of man in his relations with the cosmos. Given the neutrality of nature, man can express his relative freedom in action, but the success or failure of that action is not totally dependent upon the extent of his efforts or his moral worth, but also upon the decision of fate. In spite of his freedom to will and act within a context, man in his relations with the universe faces ultimate frustration. Life is essentially tragic, but tragedy is possible only when there is not absolute determinism. The essential indifference of God and nature means that man has relative free will and freedom of choice as far as cosmic forces are involved. To this extent Crane remains within the American tradition, and the path to progress through the faith of the Progressive social thinkers in human creativity remains open. But what about the force of the social environment? Does man escape cosmic determinism only to be bound by the institutions, traditions, and socio-economic conditions of his own society?

An examination of Maggie, George's Mother, The Monster, and the minority of Crane's other writings in which he deals with the question of man in society reveals that he did not feel man's free will was destroyed by social forces. Maggie, for example, though she "blossomed in a mud-puddle," was not solely a product of her environment. The heart of Crane's viewpoint seems to have been that man in society is subject to illusions which are at variance with reality, and that human conduct is sometimes directed by a moral code which has little applicability to the lives of the participants. Man can break the code, he can depart from the social norm and to this extent he has free will; but if he does so he must expect defeat at the hands of social prejudices. This Crane had learned quite well from his own life experience.

Man can thus exert his free will in defiance of society. Crane's position here was in line with the old American tradition that the individual was essentially free from the control of institutions and traditions, as well as in conformity with the faith of the Progressive social scientists. Does this mean that Crane believed in the Progressive religion of humanity which stated that, since evil was socially inculcated, man could save himself by creating the proper environment?²⁶ Some historians and critics, notably Professor Russell B. Nye, have answered, yes. They have tried to portray the young author as an environmentalist and social critic who believed that man's problems arose from a corrupt and stunted environment.

While it is true that Crane expressed indignation over social and economic injustice,²⁷ it is not true that he felt these were the cause of the human dilemma. Crane made this quite clear in a letter to Catherine Harris in which he stated that the root of Bowery life is cowardice, a lack of the ability to take the knocks of fortune and rise from them.²⁸ This means that the root of the problem is personal; it is contained in the men themselves. This conclusion is supported by Crane's stories and by the fact that few of his plots deal with the problem of social evils--a fact that is in line with his

basically religious orientation with its emphasis on the "inner-directed man." Professor Hoffman has explained this as follows.

His religious training had led him to consider most important the moral fortitude of the individual man, whatever his temporal circumstances. Crane consequently considered secondary the sort of social problems which the radical young Garland and the older socialistic Howells made the subjects of their fiction.²⁹

What did concern Crane was the weakness of human nature, quite apart from his social situation. Here is the reason why Crane could not accept the Progressive social scientists' optimistic outlook. Man could not save himself by saving society because he was innately weak and selfish.

There is evil and selfishness within all men because, for Crane, that is the definition of humankind. It is for this reason, and not because of a universe that disregards him, that man can never find truth, or do complete justice, or be wholly unselfish. This is emphasized in a poem, recently published, in which Crane gave his own version of the first chapters of Genesis. He pictures God placing "a glorious apple" within the reach of man and then forbidding him to touch it. But the man, like the author himself, rebelled.

The man answered in this wise:
 "Oh, most interesting God
 What folly is this?
 Behold, thou hast moulded my desires
 Even as thou hast moulded the apple.

How then?
 Can I conquer my life
 Which is thou?

My desires?
 Look you, foolish god
 If I thrust behind me
 Sixty white years
 I am a greater god than god
 And then, complacent splendor,
 Thou wilt see that the golden angels
 That sing pink hymns
 Around thy throne-top
 Will be lower than my feet.³⁰

A similar sentiment is to be found in The Black Riders, where again the implication is that man has evil within him which cannot be wholly denied.

"It was wrong to do this," said the angel.
 "You should live like a flower,
 Holding malice like a puppy,
 Waging war like a lambkin."

"Not so," quoth the man
 Who had no fear of spirits;
 "It is only wrong for angels
 Who can live like the flowers,
 Holding malice like the puppies,
 Waging war like the lambkins."³¹

Thus Stephen Crane rejected the third path to human progress. Man could not progress by reforming society because society only magnified and did not create the weakness and selfishness of human nature.

Because Crane insisted that man can never find truth or justice, because he held that the end of life is frustration and life, itself, is tragedy, he is many times dismissed as a fatalist. Most of the liberal historians and literary critics have not been kind to him for this reason. But was he a complete cynic and fatalist who, despite the fact that he was unable to forsake his religious heritage, managed to escape the American attachment to free will? The answer, of course, is that he was not. Those who dismiss him as a simple fatalist are as mistaken as those who want to enlist him in the ranks of the social critics and reformers. While admitting that man could not achieve truth, justice, or selflessness, he insisted that man could try; he could attempt to save himself by creating a code of personal conduct. As he said of his own life:

I do not confront it [life] blithely. I confront it with desperate resolution. There is not even much hope in my attitude. I do not even expect to do good. But I expect to make a sincere, desperate, lonely battle to remain true to my conception of my life and the way it should be lived. . . .³²

It was the attitude of cynical fatalism in the people of the Bowery that so irritated the poet-novelist, and he treated the Bowery gangs in Maggie and George's Mother with satiric scorn. The "indolent and cynical young men" in the small town setting of The Monster were treated in the same manner,³³ and in number sixty-eight of The Black Riders he pilloried the cynic in verse.³⁴

Crane specifically repudiated the cynic and pointed out some of the positive aspects of his own philosophy in this letter to Nellie Crouse.

The final wall of the wise man's thought however is Human Kindness of course. If the road of disappointment, grief, pessimism is followed far enough, it will arrive there. Pessimism itself is only a little little way, and moreover it is ridiculously cheap. The cynical mind is an uneducated thing.

Therefore do I strive to be as kind and as just as may be to those about me and in my meagre success at it, I find the solitary pleasure of life.³⁵

In addition to his repudiation of the cynic, there is a glimpse of his belief in a code of conduct. This code is one of the most important, yet the least appreciated, aspects of Crane's philosophy, for it illustrates in striking fashion his adherence to the central core of his father's religious code and the tradition of free will. He never elaborated the details of this code of conduct in one place, so its content must be pieced together from various writings. In the letter above, he stated that man can never achieve complete kindness and justice, but he can have some limited success in striving toward them. The same is true of honesty, as can be seen in the following letter to Joseph O'Connor in which Crane also definitely embraced the Promethean struggle.

. . . For I understand that a man is born into the world with his own pair of eyes, and he is not at all responsible for his vision--he is merely responsible for his quality of personal honesty. To keep close to this personal honesty is my supreme ambition. There is a sublime egotism in talking of honesty. I, however, do not say that I am honest. I merely say that I am as nearly honest as a weak mental machinery will allow. This aim in life struck me as being the only thing worth while. A man is sure to fail at it, but there is something in the failure.³⁶

The most misunderstood aspect of Crane's code of conduct is his espousal of the heroic ideal. This ideal does not mean, as Hartwick has taken it to mean, that Crane, like Norris and London, particularly admired "man with the bark on."³⁷ Nor can Crane, because he denounced the lack of ambition in the Bowery, be linked "in a curious way with contemporary purveyors of uplift and success literature," as Professor Persons has suggested.³⁸ Crane's heroes were not big brawling giants who triumphed over the universe as well as their human foes. In fact, they usually did not triumph at all. They could not be classed with success literature because they seldom, if ever, succeeded. The individual simply proved himself on the battlefield by his heroism--by his adherence to a code which all know and none can express. Similarly, in civilian life one became a man by striving after truth, honesty, and kindness. Chances are that the man in war would no more succeed in his attempt than the man in peace, but success was not the important factor. Rather success in such pursuits is beyond human grasp; the important thing is the attempt. In Crane's writings the result of heroic action, the result of almost every attempt to live up to this code, was death for the actor. Nor was this death usually of any significance from the viewpoint of military strategy or social improvement. The only significance was the development of the individual through

willed involvement and adherence to the code. Crane, in one way, demanded more of man than did the purveyors of success literature, or even the orthodox clergy, for he asked man to strive with no hope of ultimate success or reward.

Crane's admiration for the fighting men who lived up to the code by doing their duty on the field of battle is shown in many of his writings. This quotation is from his "War Memoirs" of the Spanish-American War.

They stood out in simple, majestic commonplace. It was the behaviour of men on the street. It was the behaviour of men. In one way, each man was just pegging along at the heels of the man before him, who was pegging along at the heels of still another man, who was pegging along at the heels of still another man who--

It was that in the flat and obvious way. In another way it was pageantry, the pageantry of the accomplishment of naked duty. One cannot speak of it--the spectacle of the common man serenely doing his work, his appointed work. It is the one thing in the universe which makes one fling expression to the winds and be satisfied to simply feel.³⁹

The "excellence of human conduct" was what Crane admired, and he admired it in the individual no matter which side he was on. Anyone who can conquer the animal instinct to flee, who will cling to the code of conduct and do his duty, is a man. These men who stand and fight are not boasting, strutting heroes but common, everyday men who know that adherence to the code may well mean their death. The qualities of doing one's duty and accepting death are perhaps best shown by Crane's group of battle veterans in "The Little Regiment."⁴⁰

In many of his stories Crane showed what he believed man not only should, but could do. Not all men, however, measured up to his standards, and light is shed upon the code by a look at one man who could not make the grade. Such a man was Peza, the main character in the short story "Death and the Child," mentioned previously.⁴¹ Peza, an Italian-educated Greek, came back to Greece as a war correspondent during the Greek War. Here he became emotionally involved in the scene of his father's homeland under invasion and the people in flight. He decided, therefore, to enter the conflict and joined the battle with dreams of grandeur. Then, frightened more by the dead men around him than by the enemy, Peza bolted and fled. Finally he managed to crawl to the top of a hill where he was confronted by an abandoned child. When Peza emerged over the top of the hill, the child looked up from his play and asked, "Are you a man?" The reader is left with no doubt that, in Crane's mind, Peza was not a true man. He could not assume the sacrificial role that brings death, but brings also dignity.

Crane spoke directly of the code in his short story, "Clan of No-Name."⁴² This is a series of connected sketches at the opening of which Crane por-

trayed a young girl who was deceiving her wealthy suitor to write to an unknown lover. Then the scene changed to a field in Cuba where an insurgent force was trying to get a supply of ammunition through Spanish lines. Among the insurgents was a new man, a young American lieutenant. When this group was attacked by the Spanish, the American, although new to the fight, realized instinctively that he was bound by a code of honor to fight a delaying action so that the supplies would not be captured. When he was killed, Crane revealed that the lieutenant had been the young girl's lover. Finally the scene switched back to the girl, who has agreed to marry her wealthy suitor. Crane concluded with this description of the code:

For the word is clear only to the kind who on peak
or plain, from dark northern ice-fields to the hot wet
jungles, through all wine and want, through lies and un-
familiar truth, dark or light, are governed by the un-
known gods; and, though each man knows the law, no
man may give tongue to it.⁴³

The young lieutenant who knew and obeyed the code lost his life but achieved tragic dignity. The girl, who either did not know or would not follow the code, achieved material success but lost dignity as a human being.

For the men in "The Open Boat" there was also a code of conduct, just as there was for the men in battle. Crane wrote:

To express any particular optimism at this time they
felt to be childish and stupid. . . . On the other hand
the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any
open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.⁴⁴

Throughout the ordeal there seems to have been complete agreement on everything, as each man followed the same unspoken code of conduct. It would also seem that through adherence to this code of conduct in a crisis situation, man can achieve a sense of brotherhood and lose the feeling of isolation that is so prevalent in Crane's writings.

It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood
that was here established on the seas. No one said that
it was so. No one mentioned it. But it dwelt in the boat,
and each man felt it warm him.⁴⁵

The correspondent, "who had been taught to be cynical of men," knew that this feeling of comradeship was "the best experience of his life."⁴⁶

This bond of fellowship that developed in the boat was not limited to the members of the small crew, but rather it involved a fellowship with mankind. As they were coasting along, the half-forgotten verse of "A Soldier of the Legion Lay Dying in Algiers," crept into the head of the correspondent. He had had to learn the poem as a child and he

had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier lay
dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as
important. . . . Now, however, it quaintly came to him

as a human living thing . . . it was an actuality--stern,
mournful and fine. . . . He was sorry for the soldier of
the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.⁴⁷

This sense of the discovery of comradeship and fellowship, not only with those who share the crisis situation but with the struggles of mankind, can also be found in Crane's war stories.

Man can and should seek truth, justice, honesty, and kindness. He can and should seek involvement with mankind through the doing of duty and obedience to the code. These things he should seek, though the personal qualities he can never truly find and involvement with mankind may very well mean death. This in itself is a great deal to ask of man, but there is still another facet to Crane's requirements, one which in many ways is the most difficult to explain. That loyalty to one's fellows in a crisis situation is part of the code has already been shown, but Crane also dealt with another kind of loyalty, which might be called love-loyalty, or loyalty of one individual to another.

Love themes occur most frequently in Crane's poetry, and here love is generally linked with pain, despair, and violence. The whole of "Intrigue" expresses the themes of love as a sacrifice, love as momentary joy and ceaseless remorse, and love as violence.

This connection between love and suffering is important with regard to the idea of loyalty. To truly love is to suffer. But if one can scale the heights of devotion to a love that surpasses devotion, he can find life. Thomas Beer, Crane's biographer, reported an incident which Crane witnessed in the Bowery, where a young prostitute was protecting with her own body the head of her drunken procurer from the kicks of his assailants. Daniel Hoffman has connected this incident with number sixty-seven of The Black Riders, "God Lay Dead in Heaven." The last lines of this poem read as follows.

Then from the far caverns
Of dead sins
Came monsters, livid with desire.
They fought,
Wrangled over the world,
A morsel.
But of all sadness this was sad--
A woman's arms tried to shield
The head of a sleeping man
From the jaws of the final beast.⁴⁸

Here is Crane's idea of love-loyalty. The relationship of two lowly individuals is universalized, as "the streetwalker and her drunken pimp are become Man and Woman."⁴⁹ Love-loyalty, like so many other aspects of Crane's code, demands involvement which will in all probability lead to sacrificial death.

Many of Crane's ideas about man, his place in the universe, and his obligation to achieve manhood, found unified expression in Crane's only best-selling novel, The Red Badge of Courage.⁵⁰ As man is an insignificant creature in the universe, so Henry Fleming was an insignificant pawn in the totality of the Civil War. But this insignificance does not totally deprive Henry, or man in general, of free will nor does it relieve him of moral responsibility. Henry, like all men, had the instinct to flee from danger, and the evil, selfish side of his nature could and did rationalize such actions. But he also possessed the capacity to fulfill his essential humanness by conquering his instinctive fears and, through a feeling of involvement with his fellows, to achieve manhood. The immediate occasion of this feeling of unity and consequent loss of selfishness may not be, indeed probably will not be, a willed, rational act. But once it comes, the individual still must wilfully involve himself if he is to achieve full manhood. Henry became a man after the battle when he rejected his old rationalizations, accepted the realities of life, and became involved in the human struggle. The Red Badge of Courage is a particular instance in which a particular individual achieved human dignity in a particular way; but it is also a symbol of what man can achieve.

Stephen Crane, like many of his contemporaries, was in rebellion against the society of which he found himself a part, but, had he been aware of their writings, he would have rejected the solutions of the equally rebellious social scientists. The key to this rejection would have been his lack of faith in their adherence to the traditional American concept of the natural man as essentially good, unselfish, and creative. For Crane, man was an insignificant isolate in a universe that did not regard him as important. Alone in this neutral universe man can act with relative freedom, but the success or failure of that action can never escape from the operation of a quixotic fate. Man in society is within, not apart from, this cosmic drama. For Crane, man in the social situation is not bound by his environment but by the evil side of his nature. Too weak to reform himself, man is unable to reform society or even to attain sustained social solidarity. This position places Crane in essential opposition to two of the social scientists' fundamental concepts--the altruistic nature of man and the doctrine of progress.

Yet he retained one aspect of the Progressive code in his insistence that to be a man means willed involvement in the human struggle. This activist spirit finds expression in the fulfillment of duty during time of war, and in the quest for truth, justice, and kindness in civil society. Perhaps nowhere else did Crane more clearly show his nostalgia for the faith of his father than by this retention of the basic elements of New Testament Christianity as the core of his ethical code. Although he placed his emphasis on human frailty (and this certainly is not outside the Christian tradition), Crane actually demanded more of man than any other writer of his time, for

he insisted that to be a man means to engage in the Promethean struggle without hope of either victory or reward. And, by his writings, he indicated his belief that some men can achieve this true manhood through willed involvement in the human struggle, an involvement that will probably mean suffering and death, but which also means the realization of the only goal open to man--the achievement of tragic dignity.

From this discussion it can be seen that Stephen Crane's philosophy was the result, not of a simple conversion to the determinism of Darwin and Zola, but of the modification of his basically religious orientation brought about through his perception, largely intuitive, of the realities of life in fin-de-siècle America. Like many others of his generation, Crane found that he could not totally reject the ideas and values of his tradition. His mind tried to accept the conclusions of scientific, matter-of-fact knowledge and the realities of the world around him, but he could not rid himself of his intellectual and emotional inheritance. To ignore this conflict within the minds of the men of this period is to miss the absorbing intellectual drama of their generation. History is change, but it is also continuity.

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Footnotes:

¹ On this point see this author's "Man and the Progressive Novelist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Minnesota, 1959), Chapter I.

² See David W. Noble, The Paradox of Progressive Thought (Minneapolis, 1958); and "The Religion of Progress in America, 1890-1914," Social Research (Winter, 1955), 417-440.

³ Ibid.

⁴ The Collected Poems of Stephen Crane, ed. Wilson Follett (New York, 1930), 8.

⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁶ The Works of Stephen Crane, ed. Wilson Follett (12 vols., New York, 1925-27), xii, 241-68.

⁷ Ibid., 242.

⁸ Ibid., 248.

⁹ Works, xii, 64-84.

¹⁰ Collected Poems, 31.

¹¹ Stephen Crane, An Omnibus, ed. Robert W. Stallman (New York, 1958), Letter from Crane to Copeland and Day, Sept. 9, 1894, 602.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Granville Hicks, The Great Tradition (New York, 1933), 160; and Introduction to Works, vi, xix.

¹⁴ Collected Poems, 14, 21.

- 15 Ibid., 83.
- 16 Ibid., 129-30.
- 17 Ibid., 130.
- 18 Ibid., 141.
- 19 Daniel G. Hoffman, The Poetry of Stephen Crane (New York, 1957), 13-14.
- 20 Collected Poems, 20. See also 41.
- 21 Ibid., 55. See also number fifty-three, 57-58.
- 22 See, for example, Charles C. Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism (Minneapolis, 1956), 85; Harry Hartwick, The Foreground of American Fiction (New York, 1934), 25; Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction (Cambridge, 1950), 189-94.
- 23 Robert W. Stallman, Stephen Crane: Stories and Tales (New York, 1955), 215-21.
- 24 Ibid., 236.
- 25 Ibid., 233.
- 26 Russell Nye, "Stephen Crane as a Social Critic," Modern Quarterly, xi (1940), 53.
- 27 For examples see "Man and the Progressive Novelists," Chapter III.
- 28 Omnibus, 655-56.
- 29 Hoffman, 175-76.
- 30 Hoffman, 76.
- 31 Collected Poems, 59. See also 11 and 54.
- 32 Stephen Crane's Love Letters to Nellie Crouse with Six Other Letters, ed. Edwin H. Cady and Lester G. Wells (Syracuse, 1954), 43-44.
- 33 Works, iii, 37.
- 34 Collected Poems, 40.
- 35 Love Letters, 35.
- 36 Omnibus, 680.
- 37 Hartwick, 27.
- 38 Stow Persons, American Minds (New York, 1958), 333-34.
- 39 Works, ix, 238.
- 40 Ibid., ii, 29-53.
- 41 Works, xii, 24-68.
- 42 Ibid., ii, 151-74.
- 43 Ibid., 174.
- 44 Stallman, Stories and Tales, 218.
- 45 Ibid., 220.
- 46 Ibid., 220-21.
- 47 Ibid., 233-34.
- 48 Collected Poems, 72.
- 49 Hoffman, 140.
- 50 The arguments in support of the following interpretation of this novel may be found in my "Man and the Progressive Novelist," 185-92.

AN IDEA OF FEMALE SUPERIORITY

NORTON MEZVINSKY

American historiography abounds with analyses of the women reformers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These analyses, whether they be those written by proponents,¹ antagonists,² or more objective historians,³ commonly revolve around the thesis that the major motivating force behind this female reform activity was the belief that women possessed abilities equal to men and, therefore, should be given equal political, economic, and social rights. Almost always overlooked in such analyses is the more extreme idea that motivated one important group of female reformers. This was the idea of female superiority, which emphasized that women rather than, and not only together with, men were best able to solve certain problems in the political, economic, and/or social areas not previously open to female activity.

Although some early women reformers may have implied it as early as the 1840's,⁴ not until 1874 was the idea of female superiority expressed clearly and directly. On August 3, 1874, Mrs. Jane Fowler Willing, faculty member at Illinois Wesleyan University; Mrs. Emily Huntington Miller, juvenile fiction writer and trustee of Northwestern University; and Mrs. Martha McClellan Brown, a prominent temperance worker in Alliance, Ohio, met together aboard a steamer bound for the National Sunday School Assembly at Fairpoint, New York. In the ensuing discussion these three agreed that women should not be confined to an existence in the home. They expressed a common belief that their sex possessed the necessary outlook, the talent, and the "god-given" obligation to work generally for the "betterment of mankind."⁵ They decided that women could cure some of society's existing ills better than could men. The scattered successes of the previous year's women's crusades against the liquor traffic,⁶ for instance, illustrated to them that the so-called weaker sex had accomplished more in a few months of temperance reforming than men had been able to accomplish in many years.⁷ Mrs. Willing, Mrs. Miller, and Mrs. Brown decided to propose to the delegates attending the National Sunday School Assembly that a national organization be created to spearhead and to give direction to such female work.⁸ The delegates greeted the proposal with enthusiasm and issued the "call," an appeal for attendance at a national convention to be held in Cleveland in November, 1874.

On November 18, 135 delegates, representing 16 states, answered the "call" and appeared in the Second Presbyterian Church in Cleveland.¹⁰ These delegates established the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the first large-scale and unified women's organization to appear on the American scene. As their organization's name indicates, WCTU women chose the alcohol problem as their chief concern and the dual advocacy of total abstinence and the legal prohibition of the liquor traffic as their major reform plank. Yet, from the time of their first meeting, the majority of white-ribboners¹¹ dedicated themselves to a broad base of reform. They expressed concern over the problems of labor and clamored for higher wages, better working conditions, courts of arbitration and conciliation, and more educational opportunities for laborers.¹² They voiced their disapproval of polygamy and divorce, helped unwed mothers, and sought to reform prostitutes.¹³ They sought to Americanize immigrants¹⁴ and to break down prejudices against Indians and Negroes.¹⁵ They agitated for slum clearance¹⁶ and asked for better jury trials.¹⁷ They argued against war and stood for peace and arbitration.¹⁸ They fought for women's rights in general and for female suffrage in particular.¹⁹ As Frances Willard proudly announced, the white-ribbon stood for all aspects of reform: prohibition, purity, philanthropy, prosperity and peace.²⁰

The many reforms advocated by WCTU women stemmed from a concern with man's environment in this world. The white-ribboners indirectly advocated the possible perfectability of man, and they reasoned from this premise that people could be bettered proportionally as society was improved. They thus believed in the necessity and possibility of solving existing social problems. While this theory was not, of course, original, the companion idea of female superiority in reform activity was a unique contribution of WCTU ideology.

From the time that Mrs. Willing, Mrs. Miller, and Mrs. Brown conceived the creation of the WCTU, the idea of female superiority was important. In presenting this idea, WCTU women first argued that the few "sincere men" could not protect adequately society's well-being nor institute needed reforms.²² The women went even further and generalized that most men did not want a "moral society." To the white-ribboners the existing society of the 1870's and 1880's was a reflection of the immoral, man-made world. Frances Willard's stirring address, delivered at the 1885 national WCTU convention, highlighted this argument. Using the prevailing public attitude towards and the "unfair laws" regarding prostitution as her primary illustrations, Miss Willard proclaimed that the prostitute, like the "too often undefended and unavenged victim of seduction and violence," was the creation of man's "sex necessity."²³ WCTU spokesmen, other than Frances Willard, heralded the charge of man's immoral society. They argued that men waged war without understanding its impact upon wives and children.²⁴ They maintained that the husband-fathers who drank alcoholic bev-

erages failed to comprehend the financial, physical, and emotional burden inflicted upon the family by their inebriety.²⁵ These and many other specific examples were used to substantiate this WCTU viewpoint.

WCTU women supplemented their negative arguments with positive expressions of female superiority. Women, argued the white-ribboners, possessed the emotional sensitivity and understanding lacking in men and were thus better able to solve the problems of society.²⁶ Even though some men had proposed worthwhile programs, WCTU spokesmen insisted that the participation of women was necessary for the successful institution of specific reforms, such as increased benefits for laborers,²⁷ or more general reforms, such as Christian Socialism.²⁸ This belief in the superiority of women prompted the white-ribboners to advocate woman suffrage and full women's rights.

WCTU members put their idea of female superiority within a religious framework. At the first, organizing convention in 1874, Mrs. Willing, Mrs. Mary C. Johnson, Mrs. Donelson, and other early WCTU leaders proclaimed that God had given women their superior qualities, had brought them together to reform society, and would continue to direct them until sin, poverty and anguish no longer existed.²⁹ Frances Willard summed up this belief by asserting that the "Divine Ruler" had chosen women as the "apostles of reform" and had given them a sense of perception, a measure of hope and faith, and a respect for justice and right superior to those possessed by men.³⁰

After 1874, WCTU spokesmen continued to believe in the divine origins of female superiority. They maintained that God not only had given women superior qualities and had chosen them to spearhead the necessary reformation of society but that He, revealing himself through the Holy Spirit, had also told them what to do and how to do it.³¹ Inspired by this idea, the white-ribboners engaged in diversified reform activity. Unlike Carry Nation, who, under holy pretense, attacked saloons in Kansas with hatchet in hand,³² WCTU women generally engaged in peaceful activity. They petitioned Congress and state legislatures, put pressure upon other governmental and educational officials, printed and distributed pamphlets, magazines, and newsletters, held public meetings, and attempted to infiltrate and influence many organizations and institutions.³³

The emphasis put upon the divine origin of female superiority is understandable when the religious backgrounds of white-ribboners and the theological position of the organization are considered. Most WCTU women were active members of specific Protestant churches that were within the fundamentalist camp.³⁴ As an organization, the WCTU officially welcomed all--Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, believer or skeptic--into its fold, but in practice it espoused a type of Protestant fundamentalism. Official statements in the WCTU press and by white-ribbon leaders emphasized a literal interpretation of the Bible.³⁵ The WCTU press repeatedly insisted

that successful social reform had to stem ultimately from a literal and fundamental gospel theology and had to be furthered by those who had "learned their social science from the Bible."³⁶

The doctrine of fundamental Protestantism became manifest in all facets of WCTU propaganda: printed material, articles in official publications, speeches by members, and in the educational material for the young. WCTU theoreticians, however, made no effort to reconcile the fundamentalist concepts of man's sinful nature and God's predestined design for this world with the previously mentioned environmental view and the implied doctrine of the possible perfectability of man. Still, this organization of women, devoted to "divinely-directed" social reform activity, furnished additional evidence that the social gospel movement was not limited, as some historians have maintained,³⁷ to liberal Protestant churches and/or to liberal groups within Protestant churches. As already shown, WCTU activity also indicates that many female Protestants were no longer willing to sit in their church pews and homes while men controlled society. These women not only began to question the ability of men to rule and to reform society, but they began to advocate the God-given social superiority of women.

Opposition to the WCTU arose simultaneously with its inception and grew larger as the organization increased its membership, activity and influence. Much of this opposition stemmed from interests, especially the brewing and distilling industries, antagonistic to the specific reforms stressed by the white-ribboners. Other opposition, however, came from men who often sympathized with the reform objectives but reacted negatively towards the expressed idea of female social superiority and female reform activity. These men, the most outspoken of whom were clergymen, were shocked that well-meaning women, especially those who called themselves religious, would "become public spectacles and would agitate under a fallacious banner of Divine direction." These men believed that women possessed superior attributes only in regard to home-making and that the ideas advocated and the activities proposed by the WCTU, if adopted by women, would lead only to a neglect of the home.³⁸

The WCTU was not throttled by this opposition. Inspired by the two-fold belief that society needed reforming and that women, because of their divinely bestowed superior qualities, were to be the major reformers, the white-ribboners exerted much influence in American society from 1874 until the early 1920's. They increased their membership from 135 in 1874 to 345,949 in 1921. They established chapters in fifty-three states and territories. They added to their ranks almost one-half million juvenile and honorary members.³⁹ Although important, these figures alone indicate but one portion of the organization's influence. The dissemination of propaganda and the pressure put upon legislators, public officials, educators, min-

isters, and the general populace in regard to many reforms brought results both on a national and on a state level.

An exemplary achievement of WCTU activity was the movement for "scientific" temperance instruction.⁴⁰ By 1877, white-ribboners had convinced the International Sunday School Committee to adopt regular temperance lessons in supervised church quarterlies.⁴¹ Because of WCTU persuasion, moreover, the Methodist Episcopal Church endorsed Sunday school temperance lessons in 1880, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South soon did likewise.⁴² The resolution of the North Alabama Conference of Methodist Churches in 1885 indicated the effectiveness of WCTU persuasion techniques: "... We will teach temperance from the pulpit, in the Sunday-school, and from house to house until public opinion is properly educated."⁴³ This terminology was specifically that used by the WCTU.

The white-ribboners did not rest with temperance teaching in Sunday schools. They became even more concerned with "scientific" temperance instruction in the public schools. This idea, although not unique to WCTU women, became a white-ribbon endeavor and success. Due almost solely to the influence of the WCTU, Vermont in 1882 passed a law requiring "scientific" temperance instruction in the public schools. Michigan and New Hampshire followed in 1883, New York and Rhode Island in 1884, ten other states in 1885. By 1887, twenty-three states had enacted such laws. By 1897, temperance education laws were on the statute books of the federal government and forty-one states, and by 1901, there was not a political division in the United States without such a law.⁴⁴

Not content with merely the passage of laws, the white-ribboners, by putting pressure upon publishers, were able to control the writing and the use of hygiene and physiology textbooks. The women made sure that the textbooks used by students emphasized the evils of alcohol and advocated total abstinence rather than moderation. The story concerning the successful attempts to institute "scientific" temperance instruction and to editorialize textbooks is important in the history of education in the United States.⁴⁵

The successful institution of "scientific" temperance instruction, although perhaps the most significant, was but one of many WCTU achievements. Other WCTU temperance activities were also successful. Indeed, an historian of the Prohibition party asserted that the WCTU did more than did any other organization to wield public sentiment in favor of total abstinence and prohibition.⁴⁶ Two historians of state prohibition movements each depicted the WCTU as the most important temperance organization in their respective states.⁴⁷ Even the distilling and brewing industries agreed that the WCTU influenced public opinion in regard to prohibition more than did any other single organization.⁴⁸ The president of the National Retail Liquor Dealer's Association, for instance, advised his organization in 1912: "We need not fear the churches, the men are voting the old tickets; we need not fear the ministers, for the most part they follow the men of the churches;

we need not fear the YMCA, for it does not do aggressive work; but, gentlemen, we need fear the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the ballot in the hands of women; therefore, gentlemen, fight woman suffrage."⁴⁹

The other achievements of the WCTU cannot be assessed so readily, yet indications exist that they were plentiful. WCTU activity played no small part in the passage of state legislation prosecuting prostitution more severely and raising the age of legal consent of women.⁵⁰ White-ribboners affected the women's rights movement, especially in regard to woman suffrage.⁵¹ They influenced the social welfare movement and even the labor reform movement.⁵² In all their activity the white-ribboners repeatedly advocated their unique idea of female superiority.

The WCTU crusade impressed many important men. Henry Ward Beecher, Charles M. Sheldon, Josiah Strong, Walter Rauschenbush and other religiously-oriented reformers first viewed the white-ribboners with favor because of their temperance advocacy. Soon these reformers, by their own admissions, were won over to the women's rights and other reform movements by the female crusaders.⁵³ The same development occurred with Neal Dow.⁵⁴ Samuel Clemens, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Cullen Bryant, Andrew Carnegie, and many others, not necessarily connected with the temperance reform, also acknowledged their being won over to many reform movements by WCTU persuasion.⁵⁵ These men were aware of the idea of female superiority. Whereas antagonists sarcastically attacked the white-ribboners for uttering "such blasphemy," the men acknowledging WCTU influence did not deny the idea. When these men considered the reforming ability displayed by WCTU women, they affirmed, if only by implication, that women possessed certain qualities superior to men.⁵⁶

The idea of female superiority remained the driving force behind WCTU activity until the early 1920's. At that time, however, the white-ribboners, highlighted by a few that had for years viewed with some suspicion the previous "do-everything" reform policy, became increasingly content with society in general. They did not continue to proclaim adamantly their uniquely superior reforming abilities. Rather, they began to emphasize that many advocated reforms had been realized and that the general position of women in society had never been better. They pointed to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment as the prime example in both these regards. Only one problem continued to remain important for them. WCTU women limited their scope almost entirely to a concern with alcohol. They argued for total abstinence and for compliance with the recently passed Eighteenth Amendment.

The transition from an organization dedicated to the broad ideology of female superiority and to a program of general social reform to an organization dedicated almost exclusively to one reform hurt the prestige of the

WCTU. The decline of the WCTU, evident not so much in membership figures as in the influencing of public opinion and legislation, has been steady up to the present time. Apparently, American men, as well as non-WCTU women, were influenced more by an extreme ideology and a general program than by an ideology and program concerned with but one specific problem. Even in regard to temperance-prohibition persuasion, the white-ribbon activity proved most successful when put within this larger framework. Such a consideration may provide historians and sociologists with an additional clue with which to study reform activity.

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Footnotes:

¹ See, for example, Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, Woman Suffrage and Politics (New York, 1936).

² See, for example, Ralph Waldo Hartley, The Age of Unreason (Boston, 1936).

³ See, for example, Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge, Mass., 1959).

⁴ See H. Addington Bruce, Woman in the Making of America (Boston, 1933), 156-87.

⁵ See Helen F. Tyler, Where Prayer and Purpose Meet (Evanston, Ill., 1949), 1-3.

⁶ The women's crusades of 1873-4 consisted of sporadic attacks by women upon saloons in various states. Most of the crusade activity took place in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and New York. The object of the attacks was to convince or to force saloon keepers to close their establishments. For a detailed treatment of the crusades see Norton Mezvinsky, "The White-Ribbon Reform, 1874-1920" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1959), 48-60.

⁷ Tyler, Prayer and Purpose, 1-3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The sixteen states were Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Alabama, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado and California. Oregon was expected to have a delegate at the convention but there is no evidence documenting her arrival. Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union (NWCTU), 1874, 7.

¹⁰ Some disagreement exists as to the exact number of states officially represented at the first convention. In her autobiography, Glimpses of Fifty Years (Chicago: WCTU Press, 1889), 349, Frances Willard recorded that eighteen states were represented. In Where Prayer and Purpose Meet, Helen F. Tyler claimed seventeen states were represented officially. In

the Minutes of the NWCTU, cited above, however, only the sixteen states are mentioned. The latter source appears to be the most authoritative.

¹¹ The white ribbon became the WCTU symbol, and WCTU members became known as white-ribboners.

¹² See "Economy as a Remedy for the Condition of the Laborer," Union Signal, xxvii (April 18, 1901), 8; "The Light Hour Day," ibid., xxvi (May 17, 1900), 9; Minutes of the NWCTU, 1886, 85-87. Lillian M. N. Stevens, A Brief History of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (Evanston, Ill.: WCTU, 1907), 57.

¹³ LuLu Loveland Shepherd, "The Mormon Kingdom and the Liquor Traffic," Signal, xlii (Dec. 14, 1916), 7, 11.

¹⁴ "The Immigration Problem," Signal, xxi (Feb. 7, 1895), 8; Minutes (1909), 113.

¹⁵ "What Shall We Do with Him" Signal, xv (Oct. 17, 1889), 8.

¹⁶ See "The Health Crusade," Signal, xv (Jan. 31, 1889), 8.

¹⁷ "Trial by Jury," Signal, xx (March 29, 1894), 8.

¹⁸ See Minutes, 1887, 84; ibid., 1895, 46-47; "The Wastefulness of War," Signal, xxxi (Dec. 7, 1905), 3; Lucinda B. Chandler, "Shall We Have Boys Trained for Soldiers?" Signal, xx (Feb. 8, 1894), 4; "Patriotism's Call to the WCTU," ibid., xliii (Apr. 19, 1917), 10.

¹⁹ See Mezvinsky, "White-Ribbon Reform," 205-28.

²⁰ Frances Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years (Boston, 1889), 411, 413-4, 218-20, 422-4, 430.

²¹ Various sociologists proposed similar theories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See, for instance, Frank Lester Ward, Applied Sociology (New York, 1906), 21-2, 130-2; Ward, Dynamic Sociology (New York, 1924), i, 8-9, ii, 2-17.

²² See Minutes, 1877, 142; ibid., 1886, 85-7; "The Wastefulness of War," Signal, xxxi (Dec. 7, 1905), 3.

²³ Minutes, 1884, 34.

²⁴ ibid., 1874, 23-8; see "Lucinda B. Chandler, "Shall We Have Boys Trained for Soldiers?" Signal, xx (Feb. 8, 1894), 4.

²⁵ Minutes, 1887, 84; ibid., 1895, 46-7.

²⁶ See Minutes, 1877, 142; ibid., 1894, 47-8.

²⁷ See "Economy as a Remedy for the Condition of the Laborer," Signal, xxvii (Apr. 18, 1901), 8; "The Eight Hour Day," ibid., xxvi (May 17, 1900), 9; Minutes, xii, 1886, 85-7.

²⁸ See "The Concentration of Wealth," Signal, xvi (Apr. 24, 1890), 8-9; "Christian Socialism," ibid., xv (July 25, 1889), 8-9; Minutes, 1889, 115-7.

²⁹ Minutes, 1874, 5, 6, 11.

³⁰ ibid., 24.

³¹ Interview with Miss Estell Bozeman, educational director of the NWCTU, June 16, 1958. Miss Bozeman related that the Holy Spirit talked

to and directed her in 1958, just as it had done to other WCTU women in 1874 and in each succeeding year. Miss Bozeman's declaration is typical of statements made annually by various delegates to the NWCTU conventions.

³² The unrestrained attacks made by this seemingly savage woman upon the saloons of Kansas between 1899 and 1901 have become almost legendary. Carry Nation, a WCTU member, considered herself the agent of God and believed that Jesus directed her. This view was little different from that proposed by official WCTU spokesmen and accepted by most white-ribboners. Carry Nation's activity, however, was so extreme that she received no backing and little approval from either the national or Kansas WCTU organizations. Mrs. A. N. Hutchinson, the state president of the Kansas WCTU between 1899 and 1901, had Carry Nation admit that the WCTU officially knew nothing about and would take no responsibility for any of the hatchet raids. No mention is made of Carry Nation in the Kansas state WCTU reports of 1899, 1900, 1901 or 1902. See Minutes of the 1899, 1900, 1901, and 1902 Annual Conventions of the WCTU of Kansas, in Annual Reports of the Kansas WCTU, 1897-1904. See also Agnes D. Hays, The White-Ribbon Reform in the Sunflower State (Topeka, Kans.: WCTU, 1953), 53-4.

³³ See Mezvinsky, "White-Ribbon Reform," 81-263.

³⁴ There were exceptions, most notably those few members who belonged to Unitarian or Universalist churches. See *ibid.*, 74, 303.

³⁵ See Minutes, 1888, 49; "The Ideal Sunday," Signal, xii (Feb., 1892), 8.

³⁶ See Wilbur F. Crafts, "The Gospel, the Very Heart of Social Reforms," Signal, xl (Sept. 17, 1885), 5. This statement by Reverend Crafts, which appeared in an official WCTU periodical, expresses well the WCTU viewpoint.

³⁷ See, for instance, Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, rev. ed. (Boston, 1955), 107-8; Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind (New Haven, Conn., 1950), 170-1.

³⁸ See Abigail S. Dunniway, Path-Breaking (Portland, Ore.: privately published, 1914), 194-207.

³⁹ Minutes, 1911, 397; 1921, 71-92.

⁴⁰ The WCTU defined temperance as total abstinence.

⁴¹ See Ernest H. Cherrington, The Evolution of Prohibition (Westerly, Ohio: American Issue, 1920), 229-30.

⁴² Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1880, 246-7; 1886, 197-8.

⁴³ Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1885, 23; also see James B. Sellers, The Prohibition Movement in Alabama, 1702 to 1943, in the James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science, xxv (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1943), 55.

⁴⁴ Tyler, Where Prayer and Purpose Meet, 244; "The New Declaration of Independence," Scientific Temperance Journal, civ (Jan., 1905), 65-71; Chicago Daily Tribune, Aug. 21, 1887, p. 2.

⁴⁵ For a detailed treatment of this story, see Mezvinsky, "White Ribbon Reform," 147-91.

⁴⁶ David Leigh Colvin, Prohibition in the United States (New York, 1926), 299.

⁴⁷ Sellar, Prohibition Movement in Alabama, 56; Daniel Jay Whitener, Prohibition in North Carolina, in James Sprunt Studies, xxvii, 104.

⁴⁸ See Thomas C. Cochran, The Pabst Brewing Company (New York, 1948), 302-24; Dunniway, Path-Breaking, 194; Carrie Chapman Catt, The Real Enemy (Pamphlet printed by National Woman Suffrage Association, no date).

⁴⁹ As quoted in Edward M. Sait, American Parties and Elections (New York, 1927), 67.

⁵⁰ See Mezvinsky, "White-Ribbon Reform," 233-63.

⁵¹ A minority group in the WCTU opposed woman suffrage and withdrew to form the Non-Partisan WCTU. See *ibid.*, 192-232; Elizabeth Cady Staton and Susan B. Anthony, ed., A History of Woman Suffrage (Indianapolis: Fowler and Wells, 1902), lv, 141.

⁵² See Mezvinsky, "White-Ribbon Reform," 228-32.

⁵³ See "The Sheldon Idea," Signal, xxvi (Feb. 1, 1900), 9; "First Brooklyn's WCTU," *ibid.*, i (Apr. 8, 1880), 6-7; Josiah Strong, editorial in Our Country, as quoted in Massachusetts WCTU Press Bulletin, Boston, Dec. 2, 1889.

⁵⁴ Minutes, 1899, 112; Neal Dow to Frances Willard, Portland, Maine, June 7, 1876, Frances Willard MSS, Collection, Frances Willard Memorial Library, NWCTU, Evanston, Illinois.

⁵⁵ See "Seen Through Many Eyes," Signal, xxxvii (Aug. 3, 1911), 18; "The Temperance Cause and the Best Methods for its Advancement," *ibid.*, iv (Dec. 3, 1881), 2; "Letter-to-the-editor," *ibid.*, ix (May 17, 1883), 4; "Carnegie and the Man Who Drinks," *ibid.*, xxviii (Feb. 6, 1902), 8; Henry W. Blair to Frances Willard, Washington, Apr. 2, 1885, Louisa May Alcott to Frances Willard, New York, Jan. 23, 1887, John Greenleaf Whittier to Frances Willard, Davers, Mass., June 7, 1876, William Cullen Bryant to Frances Willard, New York, June 7, 1876, Frances E. Willard MSS.

⁵⁶ Neal Dow stated this explicitly when he wrote to Frances Willard in regard to the signing of a prohibition petition. Neal Dow to Frances Willard. See fn. 54.

NATURALISM IN AMERICAN FARM FICTION

ROY W. MEYER

Since the deaths of Sherwood Anderson and Theodore Dreiser and the partial eclipse of writers like James T. Farrell, literary naturalism in the United States has fallen into obscurity. Whether it is "dead as the well-known dodo," as Randall Stewart says in a recent article,¹ or whether it has merely been transmuted and transformed into something no longer recognizable, the kind of naturalism practiced by Crane and Dreiser assuredly cannot be said to be a dominant force in contemporary literature. It is possibly significant that the period in which literary naturalism, characterized by an attitude and a method, was most influential in American writing coincided roughly with that in which the farm novel, a literary genre characterized by its theme and setting, enjoyed its greatest vogue. Despite a popular conception of farm fiction as prevalingly nostalgic and sentimentally romantic, a careful study of the whole genre will reveal that many of its best practitioners employed the methods of naturalism and often shared the attitude toward man and the universe held by the greater naturalists.

There seems no good reason to quarrel with the definition of naturalism given in 1922 by Vernon L. Parrington, who defined it as "pessimistic realism," characterized by objectivity, frankness, amorality, and a bias in the selection of characters, with emphasis on those of strong physical drives and little intelligence and those at the mercy of their neuroses.² If the first two of these characteristics have become the common property of virtually all twentieth century writers of fiction and if complete amorality has never been achieved, even by the most confirmed of naturalists, the acceptance of a philosophy of determinism and a bias toward pessimism remain valid criteria in determining whether a writer may be called a naturalist. Many farm novelists choose situations and characters and juxtapose these in such a way as to indicate a bias toward pessimism; and, although only a few, like Sophus Keith Winther, expressly state a belief in determinism, many of them manipulate the events in their novels so that the reader is obliged to see the characters as helpless victims of circumstance. For the purposes of this inquiry, a narrow rather than a broad definition of naturalism has seemed appropriate. Rather than label an author a naturalist if his writing displays any of the characteristics found at

one place or another in the work of those authors generally accepted as members of the naturalist school, it has seemed desirable to restrict the term to those writers whose fiction conspicuously displays the central, most frequently encountered characteristics of naturalism. If we apply Parrington's criteria--particularly determinism and pessimism--to American farm fiction, we shall find that the influence of literary naturalism has been great in this genre, that in fact some of the most indubitably naturalistic works in American fiction are to be found among those dealing with farm life.

Significantly, the beginnings of farm fiction in this country are contemporaneous with the rise of literary naturalism. Three historically important novels appeared in the 1880's, all dealing wholly or in part with farm life, and all evidencing naturalistic attitudes and techniques. The earliest of these, Edgar Watson Howe's The Story of a Country Town (1883), is, as the title indicates, a story of small-town life and touches upon actual farm life only briefly at the beginning of the book. Because of this and because its pessimism is expressed through an extremely melodramatic situation, the novel is at best only on the peripheries of farm fiction and of naturalism. In the unsparing realism of its treatment of country life, however, it anticipates the second of these three novels, Harold Frederic's Seth's Brother's Wife (1886).

Seth's Brother's Wife can be regarded as the first authentic treatment of farm life, and, together with Frederic's better-known work, The Damnation of Theron Ware (1896), as a harbinger of naturalistic fiction in the United States. Despite holdover trappings from earlier nineteenth century romantic fiction, features which seem to have made it the victim of burlesque treatment,³ Seth's Brother's Wife portrays upstate New York farm life in colors gloomy enough to satisfy the most pessimistic of naturalists, and offers little if any indication that the characters are free agents. Rural life is decadent and rural people either share its decadence or run away to the city at their first opportunity. This is the consequence of inevitable social changes, Frederic implies, and if the individual has any freedom, it is only the freedom to choose between submitting to these changes or wasting his energies in impotent rebellion against them.

Another early novel of farm life, Joseph Kirkland's Zury: The Meanest Man in Spring County (1887), displays some evidence of a deterministic philosophy in that the main character, a miser whose name, Zury, is a corruption of "usury," is the product of a hard pioneering environment in which the personal qualities favorable to the accumulation of wealth are necessary to survival. But it ultimately fails to qualify as a work of authentic naturalism. Zury's regeneration and transformation at the hands of a young schoolteacher whom he marries are both artistically inept because implausible and at variance with the deterministic attitude displayed earlier in the book.

A stronger case can be made out for Hamlin Garland, whose early works show a definite bias toward pessimism and an apparent acceptance of determinism. In the best of the six stories that composed the first edition of Main-Travelled Roads (1891) the characters seem inescapably molded and victimized by the harsh environment in which they find themselves. Although the prairie is lonely and man is sometimes the victim of natural forces, Garland's emphasis is on social determinism; the defeated characters, like Haskins in "Under the Lion's Paw" and Jason Edwards in the later (1892) novel of that title, are conquered mainly by economic conditions. Yet Garland's obvious sympathy for these characters militates against any suggestion of amorality, and his reformist zeal is ultimately inconsistent with a thoroughgoing determinism. More fundamental in rendering Garland's "naturalism" suspect is his own desire to dissociate himself from the naturalism of Zola. As a recent study points out, "Garland's comments show that he desired to stand apart from the naturalist movement which to him meant a preoccupation with sexuality, vice, and crime."⁴ In view, therefore, of such evidence as this and also of his later apostasy even from the genteel realism of Howells (in romantic novels like Hesper and The Captain of the Gray-Horse Troop), one is forced to regard Garland as, at most, a borderline naturalist and that in only a few early works.

The early deaths of Crane and Norris and the suppression of Dreiser's Sister Carrie slowed down the development of American naturalism in the first decade of the twentieth century, but it experienced a revival in the next decade, with a succession of novels by Dreiser, Masters' Spoon River Anthology, Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio, and other works in various genres. Farm fiction, however, did not experience a parallel growth. After an auspicious beginning in the 1880's and 1890's, it slipped back into the sentimentality and romanticism of the earlier nineteenth century. Except for the contributions of Willa Cather, which are romantic rather than naturalistic, almost no artistically significant farm novels appeared in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and it is not until 1925 that we encounter a work that can definitely be termed naturalistic.

In that year, which saw the publication of the novel that has come to be regarded as the best example of literary naturalism in America, Dreiser's An American Tragedy, the appearance of G. D. Eaton's Backfurrow provided the most clearly naturalistic treatment of farm life (and, incidentally, the severest indictment of that life) since Frederic's novel in 1886. This "hymn of hate," this "paean of loathing," as one reviewer called it,⁵ apparently sets out to debunk once and for all the myth that depicts the farm as the repository of all virtue, and, like Frederic's novel, goes to the opposite extreme of showing it as the repository of all vice. Nature and man conspire to produce this condition. The locale chosen is a stony, hilly region where even the hardest work is no guarantee of a living, and the people are uniformly selfish, vindictive, hypocritical, grasping, and thoroughly miser-

able. The central character, Ralph Dutton, is scarcely more of a hero than Clyde Griffiths. He is the product and victim of his environment, deluded for a time into the belief that he has some control over his fate but falling at last into a kind of nihilism. Even while life seems to contain a measure of hope for him, his reading and his experiences lead him to interpret it in purely materialistic terms:

It was a little disappointing, and yet every little thing, every big thing, which he thought fine and good, resolved itself into something very material when he sought the origin of it. All genius, all art, all love, all tenderness and consideration must be just as material, just as lacking in the spiritual. Everything in one way or another, caused by the needs of the body.⁶

After a series of shattering misfortunes, he finally resigns himself to the inevitable, too dulled and beaten by his experiences to struggle any longer. Looking on his prospects at this stage he sees that "In any case he would be simply a human animal, unable to do more than to live, or to die and to disintegrate as ignominiously as a dead rabbit or a fallen apple."⁷ Both in his unsparing pessimism and in his apparent acceptance of a dark determinism, Eaton is writing as a naturalist in this novel.

With the appearance of Giants in the Earth in 1927, the farm fiction of Ole Edvart Rølvaag began to appear in English. Although Rølvaag would hardly qualify as a thoroughgoing naturalist, the importance of his work in the genre requires that he be given some consideration. His biographers find both naturalistic and romantic elements in his work: a naturalistic technique employed on essentially romantic material.⁸ Certainly the death of Per Hansa, sent into the blizzard on a futile quest for the minister desired by the dying Hans Olsa, seems to have been determined by circumstances over which he has little if any control. Earlier, however, Per Hansa seems the very embodiment of free will--resourceful, adventurous, energetic. It can be argued, of course, that Per Hansa is as much the product of forces beyond his control as Frank Cowperwood in Dreiser's The Financier and The Titan; and on this argument must rest the case for Rølvaag as a naturalist. But there is a buoyancy about his portrayal of Per Hansa and other characters, in Giants in the Earth and in the later novels on the same theme, that appears to preclude any deeply pessimistic view on the part of the author. Despite Beret's insanity and her later religious fanaticism, there is a cheerfulness about the Spring Creek settlement that fails to accord with the deepening gloom that settles over McTeague and other clearly naturalistic novels. One is left with the feeling that Rølvaag was finally a believer in free will, within limits, and that, despite doubts about the cultural fate of the Americanized descendants of the immigrants and about the prospects of an increasingly urban society, he was fundamentally a meliorist to whom any consistently pessimistic view was alien.

Upon the foundations laid by these novelists of the 1920's, farm fiction proliferated in the next decade. The romantic vein persisted in the work of authors like Bess Streeter Aldrich and Rose Wilder Lane, but in others the influence of naturalism was now more fully evident than before. In 1932 Vardis Fisher began a series of grimly realistic novels about farm life in a primitive section of Idaho. Despite a good deal of romantic coloration, his first novel, In Tragic Life, is essentially naturalistic in its emphasis on the environment as a conditioning and determining force in the development of the individual. In choosing as his central figure a hypersensitive, neurotic boy (in accord with the practice of naturalists like Sherwood Anderson), Fisher underlines the harshness and brutality of the environment in which the boy grows up. Pessimistic is a mild term to apply to his picture of a world filled with a continuous round of violence, cruelty, mutilation, and death; a world in which all the forces of nature and man seem to the boy bent on his humiliation, torture, and ultimate destruction. Fisher's fondness for characters of gargantuan strength and size and his interest in Old Testament heroes suggest an admiration for the heroic and intensely individualistic reminiscent of Norris in The Octopus and such minor novels as Moran of the Lady Letty. Whether this predilection, found also in Jack London, is strictly compatible with a philosophy of determinism is at least disputable. In any case, it does not figure importantly in Fisher's novels about farm life, where his treatment of his materials is essentially naturalistic.

Elements of naturalism may be found in Erskine Caldwell's two novels of the early thirties, Tobacco Road (1932) and God's Little Acre (1933). His characters are the helpless victims of circumstance, their fates determined by economic conditions (and resultant ignorance) and by their own biological drives. Jeeter Lester and his relatives live in a poverty of whose causes they have only the vaguest comprehension; their actions and their chronic inaction are alike the result of their biological heritage, coupled with an economic plight that affords them no opportunity to escape by realizing even their limited potentialities. Toward them Caldwell maintains so scrupulous an amorality that the reader is hard put to feel sympathy for them, and there is a substantial risk (as evidenced by parodies) of producing laughter rather than compassion or indignation. The presence of this danger does not disqualify Caldwell's work as authentic naturalism, however, for it is apparent also in Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg and even in Norris' McTeague.

Although Caldwell's novels are definitely naturalistic, the weakness just alluded to suggests that employment of the techniques of naturalism does not always guarantee farm fiction that can be called genuinely naturalistic or artistically satisfying. When applied to recalcitrant material (basically romantic, for example) or when utilized by a writer who is either not wholly in sympathy with the naturalistic view of life or simply not a

competent craftsman, these techniques sometimes produce grotesque results. Howard Erickson's Son of Earth (1933) seems to be an attempt to employ the naturalistic principles of determinism and pessimism to the career of an immigrant farm boy. Like Eaton's Ralph Dutton, Tolf Luvversen is the victim of circumstances, chiefly environmental, which prevent him from achieving any measure of success and drive him finally to a state of hopeless resignation and cloddish indifference. But the persistent oversimplification and exaggeration, both of the obstacles confronting Tolf and of his emotional response to those obstacles, result in nothing more than a highly colored, essentially romantic melodrama.

This charge cannot legitimately be leveled against Sophus Keith Winther's Grimen trilogy, even though the situation here is much the same--an immigrant family trying to make a place in the American environment--and many of the same techniques are used. The difference lies in Winther's more restrained use of these techniques. An avowed naturalist,⁹ Winther demonstrates a belief in determinism in his three Nebraska novels, Take All to Nebraska (1936), Mortgage Your Heart (1937), and This Passion Never Dies (1938), and he displays an equally strong bias toward pessimism in his selection of details. The Grimsen family are the victims of many features of the American world--the indignities suffered by people of foreign birth, the abuses of land speculation, the unpredictability of the prairie climate--but they are also the beneficiaries of the educational and occupational opportunities afforded by this new world. If the parents go down to ultimate defeat, the children meet with varying degrees of success. Winther shows that acceptance of a deterministic view does not necessarily lead to a preoccupation, in fiction, with characters whose careers end in mental or moral collapse or in violent death; and he is no less a determinist for his willingness to show, equally with those whom the inscrutable forces of the universe hurl to destruction, those who are by these same forces elevated to positions of material and emotional triumph.

After the efflorescence of the twenties and thirties, the farm novel, as a genre with many practitioners and a steady output, began to decline about the time of World War II and almost died out in the later 1940's. But its last decade saw the publication of works by three of its most distinguished writers, all of whom embraced the methods and philosophy of naturalism to some degree: Paul Corey, Herbert Krause, and Frederick Manfred (Feike Feikema).

Of these three, Corey is probably the most clearly a naturalist in his approach. In the Mantz family trilogy, Three Miles Square (1939), The Road Returns (1940), and County Seat (1941), he follows the fortunes of an Iowa farm widow and her four children in the period 1910-1930. The painstaking recording of details characteristic of Dreiser is evident in Corey's writing, together with the Dreiserian refusal to pass judgment on his characters or their actions. As in Dreiser, the implication seems to be that

these people are not in any real sense responsible for what they do. When Otto Mantz, who comes as close to being a central character as anyone in the trilogy, thinks he may have to leave college and marry a girl he has got into trouble, Corey records without condemnation the young man's wish to escape the situation, whatever the cost to the girl. The selection of details suggests not so much a bias toward pessimism as a desire to include a large and representative sampling of real life. If this involves the inclusion of what the tender-minded critic might call "sordid" details, it gives no undue emphasis to such material. Like Dreiser and Farrell, Corey can be charged with weighting his novels with too much factual documentation; the reader tends to lose his way in a forest of minutiae. Corey's rigorous amorality in the trilogy is abandoned in a later work, Acres of Antaeus (1946), in which his moral purpose (defense of the family farm and attack on corporate agriculture) overwhelms both his naturalism and his artistic sense.

Krause is much less obviously in the naturalistic tradition, but there are suggestions of determinism in his work and certainly strong evidence of a bias toward pessimism. The latter is most evident in his first novel, Wind Without Rain (1939), like Fisher's In Tragic Life an account of the trials of a sensitive youth growing up in a harsh environment. The universe seems utterly hostile to Franz Vildvogel, as it did to Fisher's hero, but the succession of misfortunes that befall Franz are more credible than those in the earlier novel, and the effect is more moving. A sense of determinism seems implicit in the hopeless struggle of Franz with his environment and in the suggestion at the end of the novel that he, who has suffered so acutely from the tyranny of his father, may be following in the same path toward ruthless dominion over his family. In The Thresher (1946) the main character, Johnny Black, seems driven by forces over which he has no control (symbolized by the threshing machines that he operates), driven to being a virtual accessory in the death of his best friend, to disharmony with his wife, finally to death. Pessimism is evident in this book as in the earlier one, but the author's restraint makes it less pervasive.

Manfred's chief contribution to naturalistic farm fiction is a long novel, This is the Year (1947), about Frisian immigrants to northwestern Iowa. The central figure, Pier Frixen, is not, like Winther's characters, much handicapped by his immigrant background (he was born in America), but he is, like the poor whites in Caldwell's work, illiterate and grossly ignorant of the economic and natural circumstances which mold his destiny. Imperious to warnings about bad farming practices, he loses much of his farm to erosion before he loses the rest to the bank. In the end he is defeated, although he is unaware of it, fully as much as the Lesters or Eaton's Ralph Dutton. Parrington's term "pessimistic realism" aptly fits this novel. Besides the obvious determinism in Manfred's choice of a central character, there is in this novel a frankness seldom surpassed in American fiction.

This is evident particularly in the detailed descriptions of Pier's wife's miscarriages and the injuries suffered by Pier in his frequent falls from windmills, roofs, and trees. The enormous amount of sheer factual detail in this novel brands Manfred a naturalist of the Dreiser-Farrell school. If This is the Year is something less than pure naturalism, it is because of a strong romantic strain in the author, evidenced chiefly in his incorporation into the novel of snatches of Frisian folklore and in the songs which Pier improvises as he goes about his work. Less jarring in their context than McTeague's canary or the affair of the elderly couple in Norris' novel, they do introduce an element not in keeping with the predominantly naturalistic tone of the book.

Other naturalistic writers than these have dealt tangentially with farm life. One thinks immediately of Frank Norris and The Octopus (1901), that Zolaesque story of California wheat ranchers in conflict with the railroad monopoly. Its exclusion on the grounds that the main characters are big businessmen rather than farmers may seem to be giving undue weight to what is, finally, a matter of definition; but a stronger reason for its omission here can be found in the fact, noted by C. C. Walcutt, that the protagonists in this novel seem possessed of much more free will than their counterparts in Zola's Germinal and La Terre and in some degree equipped to fight the railroad.¹⁰ The obligation Norris apparently felt to resolve in a higher synthesis the antitheses he has set up also weakens this novel's claim to consideration as a work of real naturalism.

John Steinbeck, too, deals with farm life in the early chapters of The Grapes of Wrath (1939), where the Joads are driven by many of the same forces, economic and biological, that afflict Caldwell's Lesters and Manfred's Pier Frixen, but where also the power of the individual personality, in the characters of Casy and Ma, plays a role not in strict harmony with a deterministic outlook. Of Mice and Men (1937) is more clearly naturalistic, for George and Lennie are almost equally powerless to determine their destinies and merely drift along from job to job pursuing an unattainable mirage of security and well-being. They are not farmers, however, but simply rootless men with no specialized skills, whose work in the short period covered by the novel happens accidentally to be agricultural. Hence there is some question as to whether Of Mice and Men can properly be termed a farm novel.

Other novels by other novelists might be mentioned and other objections raised to them. But the examples chosen are sufficiently numerous and sufficiently varied to afford a wide sampling of naturalistic farm fiction. As one looks back upon this assortment of good and bad novels, at least two questions arise: How do these books fit into the pattern of naturalistic fiction as a whole? And why has the naturalistic vein been so prominent in farm fiction?

In answering the first question, it may be useful to resort to the schemes of classification proposed by C. C. Walcutt in his study, American Literary Naturalism, a Divided Stream. He sees the naturalistic novel as taking five forms: the clinical, the panoramic, the slice-of-life, the stream of consciousness, and the chronicle of despair.¹¹ Of these, farm fiction has clearly preferred the last, with some efforts, mostly lacking in finesse, in the direction of the first; almost nothing of the stream-of-consciousness type has appeared and relatively little of the panoramic (except The Octopus) or of the slice-of-life. Walcutt sees four styles employed: the documentary, the satiric, the impressionistic, and the sensational.¹² Farm fiction has leaned heavily toward the documentary style, with a few examples of the impressionistic (as in Krause) and the sensational (notably Caldwell and Fisher), but with almost no trace of the satiric.

Qualitatively, farm fiction has not enjoyed a high reputation in the twentieth century. A critical public increasingly oriented toward urban life and urban values has seldom been able to take novels of farm life seriously and has tended to relegate all of them to the limbo of the sub-literary. The publication of a multitude of inferior farm novels has contributed to the denigration of a distinguished minority, the best of which are comparable to the works of the greater urban naturalists. It must be admitted, however, that all too frequently even naturalistic farm novels are better as illustrations of naturalism than as works of art. The authors employ the techniques and reflect the attitudes of naturalism without displaying the moral imagination, esthetic judgment, and technical skill required to produce truly superior fiction.

The second question--why should naturalism so often have been found in farm fiction?--can be answered only by conjecture. Besides the probability that the two--the method and the genre--flourished contemporaneously because of separate causes which happened to coincide in time, there is the indisputable fact that the material of farm fiction lends itself with especial facility to naturalistic treatment. On the farm, where modern civilized man is most intimately and constantly in contact with nature, he can most readily be seen as a part of that nature, his personality and his behavior determined by it. Man-made types of determinism--economic and social--are not absent; indeed they are often made the principal forces operating on the characters. But they are conceived too as parts of nature, nature operative through man as agent. Because most of the farm novelists were of rural background, it may be assumed that their early experiences with nature had predisposed them toward a naturalistic view of life.

Furthermore, since pessimism is frequently the most conspicuous naturalistic trait encountered in farm fiction, one may conjecture that possibly some of these writers reacted against the farm life they had known and worked off their antipathies in their novels. Artists tend to be sensitive people, and some of those who spent their early years on the farm may have

felt toward the manure pile much as Hawthorne did at Brook Farm. This hypothesis might also provide a clue as to why so many of the writers here discussed--Garland, Corey, Krause, Manfred, to mention but four--turned after two or three farm novels to the writing of historical fiction or books about the romantic mountain West.

This pessimism may also be attributable in part to the series of economic crises that plagued rural America during the period covered by the writers of farm fiction. It is worth noting that farm fiction developed around 1890, in a period of agricultural depression, languished during the first two decades of the twentieth century, a period of relative prosperity, and reached a peak in the 1920's and 1930's, when agriculture was experiencing another time of crisis. This agrarian discontent, analyzed by John Hicks and Theodore Saloutos, probably influenced the work of these novelists in much the same way that the depression of the 1930's influenced the urban fiction of Farrell, Dos Passos, and others. This is not to say that most farm fiction is propagandistic or that there is much of it that could be termed proletarian literature. With notable exceptions (Garland's Jason Edwards and Corey's Acres of Antaeus, for example), these novels treat the economic issue as incidental factors in the lives of their characters, not as the central theme. But the economic troubles experienced by the American farmer in the five decades from 1890 to 1940 undoubtedly had some part in producing the pessimism that pervades most farm fiction about this period.

Whatever the reasons, philosophical, emotional, or economic, these writers and others chose to write their most distinctive works in the manner of the greater naturalists and in so doing made their individual contributions to more than a half century of significant fiction.

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Footnotes:

¹ Randall Stewart, "Dreiser and the Naturalistic Heresy," The Virginia Quarterly Review, xxxiv (Winter, 1958), 116.

² Vernon L. Parrington, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America: 1860-1920 (New York, 1930), 323-325. The discussion of naturalism is based on notes for a lecture delivered at the University of California in 1922.

³ There are indications that the British writer Stella Gibbons had this novel, among others, in mind when she wrote her comic parody, Cold Comfort Farm (1932), whose cast of grotesques includes a young sensualist named Seth and an embittered dowager who saw "something nasty in the woodshed" at age two and has lived in seclusion ever since.

⁴ Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction (Cambridge, 1950), 143. Although he concedes that "Garland's theory of veritism shows that he was substantially a realist--not a naturalist..." Ahnebrink insists that in practice "Garland went a step beyond Howells' realism toward naturalism" (Ibid., 150) Of Main-Travelled Roads he says that "In these impressionistic stories the author came close to naturalism in his choice of subject matter and characters, and in his emphasis on social determinism." (Ibid., 82) On the other hand, Thomas A. Bledsoe, in his introduction to the Rinehart edition of Main-Travelled Roads, says categorically that "Garland was no naturalist, nor even one of the writers of the nineties who most nearly practiced the formula of naturalism." (P. xxvi.) Bledsoe rests his case on the contention that Garland never fully accepted the deterministic view but always left room for individual moral responsibility in his characters.

⁵ New York Times Book Review, February 15, 1925, 16.

⁶ G. D. Eaton, Backfurrow (New York, 1925), 258.

⁷ Ibid., 326.

⁸ Theodore Jorgenson and Nora O. Solum, Ole Edvart Rølvaag: A Biography (New York, 1939), 347.

⁹ Desmond Powell, "Sophus Keith Winther: The Grimsen Trilogy," The American Scandinavian Review, xxxvi (June, 1948), 146.

¹⁰ Charles C. Walcutt, American Literary Naturalism, A Divided Stream (Minneapolis, 1956), 142-145.

¹¹ Ibid., 21.

¹² Ibid., 22.

HISTORY IN THE LIBERAL ARTS: A THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

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One cannot maximize teaching results from any discipline, say history, until a methodological appraisal has been made as to what one may reasonably expect of it as a body of knowledge. Neither may its proper place in the curriculum be determined without a consideration of what we may demand of both art and science. Until clarification results, the position of history in the curriculum will continue to be ambiguous.

The author assumes that painting is a typical art form and that physics is a typical science; our specific task is to compare painting, history, and physics as kinds of knowledge with reference to the following aspects: 1) purpose of the discipline 2) nature and significance of the aesthetic component 3) kind of knowledge yielded and 4) characteristics of the communication system.

One crucial question will be what, if anything, the artist may properly do in conceptualizing and creating a work of art which is denied the scientist by the essential structure, purpose, and method of his discipline. Suppose, for example, it is perceived that the painter is allowed certain liberties in communicating his ideas which are not admissible to the physicist. Then one ought to obtain a better understanding of the position of history vis-a-vis art and science by seeing whether these liberties are customarily extended to the historian, or denied to him, by the methodologist.

Since the rebirth in the Renaissance of non-religious art, artists have sought a justification for it; romantic painters in nineteenth century France offered the attractive ideology of art for art's sake. This theory insists that art, as the pursuit of the aesthetic experience through the creation of beauty of form and color, must be an end in itself, regardless of meaning and expression, and not merely a means to some other end. Whistler's celebrated painting of an Arrangement in Grey and Black affords an excellent example of a conflict between an artist who felt art should be independent of meaning and a public which insisted that art be related to experience. Whistler intended to experiment with color combinations, being indifferent to subject matter, whereas the public valued the work only for its association with the idea of mother. Had he painted an old grey mare outside a village blacksmith shop, Whistler might have been equally satisfied with his artistry, but not so the sentimental public.¹ There is an obvious danger that the latter

may put a greater value on a mediocre painting of an object symbolizing love than a superb painting unattached to any such emotive symbol. To declare that art has a terminal and not an instrumental value is not to endorse the extreme position that all art is useless. What is primary is the recognition that an object of art need not be instrumental in order to qualify as an excellent work of art, and, furthermore, that stress on the instrumental character of art may be a potential threat to the existence of art itself.

On the contrary, Western science is valued on pragmatic grounds, for it aspires to a secular control of the forces of nature. Of course, there are scholars like P. W. Bridgman who contends that the "pure" scientist is one who is impelled through sheer curiosity to understand phenomena without regard for their practical aspects. However, even he concedes that the greatest single gift of science to the public is the concept that the world is "understandable."² Robert J. Oppenheimer is convincing when he argues that science "means a common power, a power to achieve that which could not be achieved without knowledge." One of the most compelling reasons for supporting "pure" scientific research is the realization that without it technological advance, upon which we are all dependent, would grind to a halt.³ Therefore, we value science not as an end in itself, but because it is necessary and useful in obtaining certain other desired outcomes.

Unlike art, history's principal value lies in the message itself rather than in the mode of conveyance. The value of history lies in the fact that it supplies society a crucial element that it lacks, that of memory. Although history, as group memory of a meaningful past, is not as immediately available as personal memory, it is in some cases more reliable. All current social problems have their roots in history, and an intelligent approach to their solution demands a consideration of historical evolution. Knowledge of historical phenomena, says Morton White, affords "an additional perspective from which we view things; a perspective that yields important information for purposes of prediction and control." This is particularly true when historians give "dynamic generalizations" about recurring phenomena, say the tendency of the descendants of parvenus to become aristocratic.⁴ Like empirical science, therefore, history has instrumental values. When methodologists contemplate the discipline of history, they think of man's ability to learn from past experience. Time spent on the study of history is justified because it is a means to this end.

One is almost immediately aware of the importance of the aesthetic component when studying the philosophy of art. This occurs because the primary task of art is "to treat the ineffable beauty . . . of the aesthetically immediate." Thus, anything apprehendable, say the blueness of Joan Miro's Las-so, must be seen to be known. The richness of its color may not even be fully intuited by the observer over long periods of time. In this sense the blueness is ineffable and hence mystical.⁵

Apparently the aesthetic feeling cannot come if the work of art strikes so familiar a chord as to divert attention from the art object itself. The caveat against personal identification with the subject of a painting, say that of a doctor brooding at the bedside of a sick child, is a justification of abstract art. This art affirms the principle: "Life as such is felt as the disturber of the aesthetic enjoyment."⁶ The aesthetic feeling comes only to those who, amid suitable conditions, have surrendered to the art object and are absorbed in it.

Above all, there is no impulse to do anything practical when one experiences the aesthetic feeling. The Indian *Sahitya Darpana* describes the impulse in purely religious terms. "It is," concludes Morris Weitz, "a kind of Platonic realm of emotional universals, the very contemplation of which is good for its own sake."⁷ The aesthetician, as aesthetician, is indifferent to matters of sensed space and historical time. He does not care whether the particular object was wrought by hand in the Ming dynasty or machine tooled in Pittsburgh the day before. Neither does he care to pry into the state of mind of its maker. All of these questions introduce intellectual problems which demand answers before the object itself may be appreciated in an historical or sociological sense. They thus divert attention from the thing-in-itself which yields the aesthetic component.⁸

In physical science there appears a serious gap between problem solving, which is most valued, and the aesthetic component. When an artist contemplates a Grecian urn, he is concerned with the level of immediate perception, that is, line, form, color, etc. But, concludes F. S. C. Northrop, for contemporary science the real "is not even such that it can be grasped by the imagination, to say nothing about it being sensed; only formally by the intellect can it be known."⁹ Regardless of its aesthetic properties, for example, the mechanistic theory fails to account for the mysterious deviation of the electron from its trajectory. Consequently, it is useless to science.¹⁰ Even if we grant the contention of Ashley Montagu that the aesthetic component permeates mathematical and laboratory situations,¹¹ we are still confronted with the primacy of the scientific demand of functionalism. Beauty without utility will solve no problems concerning the nature and behavior of physical reality.

History deals with the past, or an essential part of time which is discovered intellectually. Historical documents are the result of certain intellectual concepts on the part of the recorder of the event. The historian's sensory impressions of an old document with peculiar markings on it are on the level of perception, but this experience has only limited interest. When the researcher makes the necessary transition from sensory impressions to the assumption that the document was the product of a specific personality in a designated space-time span, he has thereby passed to the field of scientific constructs. Since the labors of an historian begin at this point, it is

evident he must adopt a problem-solving attitude which diverts attention from the possible aesthetic properties of the thing-in-itself.

Since the original observer has already translated the event into an intellectual concept, and the event itself is unobservable to the historian, he must deal with scientific postulates.¹² Confronted with the testimony of the witness, the writer of the document, and unable to put searching questions to him directly, the historian must begin by asking himself whether the witness was able as well as willing to tell the truth. While an examination of the document itself is imperative in determining answers to these pertinent questions, the historical document is meaningless if apprehended in isolation. Likewise, historical fact is meaningless if unrelated to other facts and to deductive thought necessary to give meaning to congeries of facts.

The kind of knowledge yielded by the arts generally concerns the inner man. Symbolism in art represents an effort to formulate a meaningful language whereby man can make public his private world, revealing his emotions, values, and insights into truth. Beyond this is the belief of idealists in art that this inner world is the real world. According to Benedetto Croce, in order to know reality, we may penetrate, by a process of sympathy and intuition, "to the real nature of the object, thus discovering for the first time the strangeness and multiplicity of its qualities."¹³ Jacques Maritain quite properly calls this process the exact opposite from the abstraction of scientific truth.¹⁴ This insistence that the artist can penetrate the plane of the commonplace event to discover the world of true reality has been voiced by many prominent Western contemporary artists.

This artistic conviction of its knowledge of inner reality cannot be dismissed as symptomatic of a uniquely disordered period in art history because Oriental artists have traditionally maintained the same philosophy. When a Chinese artist singles out a bird or a flower, he tries to achieve self-identification with his subject "so that, being it, he can create it."¹⁵ Japanese art is characterized by the leap of faith "that the essential truth could be better caught by an artist when he pierced through, or even neglected, externals."¹⁶ Historically this tendency is uppermost in Indian art. Even the figures in the erotic temple art are not meant to function biologically. One perceives mathematical relations rather than social interaction.¹⁷

Science is content to waive ontological reality. It confines itself to an attempt to understand process, a dynamic and changing kind of physical reality. It can describe and classify things, explain their interrelationships, and formulate laws on the basis of their behavior. It can break things down into their component parts, but it will not attempt to say what either the thing or its elements "really are." Neither is it concerned with problems of free will and ultimate reality.¹⁸

Of course science deals not only with unseen elements but with unobservable ones; but, as in the case of the alpha particle and the electron in the famous cloud chamber experiment of C. T. R. Wilson in 1911, these unobservables are "latently observable." Henry Margenau explains similar phenomena. It is true, says he, that we cannot see the individual electrons, nor can we tell which one of the two holes the electron passed through. But if, on this account, we should deny the existence and the mass of an electron we should be ignoring a valuable aspect of our experience, namely "that there was after all an observable pattern on the screen." The primary problem for science is to reduce the system to order.¹⁹

History can neither legitimately be used to explain the "real nature" of man, nor what it was "really like" to have been any individual in history. Historians, as well as methodologists, are aware of the difference between the brute event and written records by fallible observers. If it were possible for the historian to say what it was "really like" to have been Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms, it would mean that, beginning with admittedly imperfect documents, the researcher could not only somehow detail the event exactly as it happened, but probe the soul of Luther until that monk yielded all his secrets. As soon as one asks how this can be done, it is obvious that the method is not acceptable by scientific canons. Sidney Hook concludes that what the researcher "offers as evidence of the historical subject's state of mind does not differ in kind from the evidence that he offers for the physical behavior of the historical subject."²⁰

Accepting the postulate that, within recorded history, human nature has not changed,²¹ the job for the historian is to discover why the behavior of men and peoples have differed so widely in space and time.²² In such a dispassionate study, the historians may assist other social scientists in the common goal of a science of man.

Consequently, the historian of Luther at Worms appears as a behavioral scientist, for he describes, explains, and analyzes the way he spoke and acted there. Whatever the individual variations, the historian, fortified by a working hypothesis, attempts to discover the myriads of facts clustered around this single event, to select those deemed most pertinent, and to relate them in a meaningful order. To be effective, the hypothesis must be impartially weighed against alternate hypotheses by some criterion or rough measuring device independent of it. This is the historian's equivalent for the controlled experiment.²³

Despite growing communication difficulties between scientist and layman, science is not to blame for this unfortunate condition. According to Albert Einstein, science seeks to set forth the fewest conceptual terms of clarity in order to explain coherently the orderly workings of nature. Euclidian geometry and mathematics afford an excellent illustration of the demand for simplicity. As long as classical physics could combine these and Newtonian concepts of physical reality to explain the behavior of macroscop-

ic phenomena, the reasonably informed layman could comprehend science. But the system fell because of an inability to account for the stubborn demands of empirical fact. Twentieth century atomic research revealed a world which was incomprehensible as long as one adhered to the concepts of classical physics. Quantum physics was formulated out of the basic necessity of science "to make the chaotic diversity of our sense-experience correspond to a logically uniform system of thought." If the new physics is esoteric, this is because its theory must explain the unorthodox character of the various particles inside the atom. Science, however, continues its search for a simple and unifying theoretical basis for all the sciences.²⁴

Art is rooted in the artist's imagination. It is in this sense that one properly speaks of the artist creating experience while the scientist seeks to understand it. The fact that art does deal in scientific truth and historical fact does not eliminate the distinction to be made between imaginative or intuitive truth, and scientific or demonstrated truth. Literature is not necessarily good literature because it borrows from both science and history, and it may evoke beauty, truth, and goodness without an appeal to either.²⁵

As a communication system, art involves the presentation by the artist of a new way of looking at a portion of the universe. It is successful when the observer understands its import, or its truth.²⁶ However, one may not demand that such communication be simple and direct. The arts may exalt mystical elements of human experience to the point that the mode of communication becomes mystical.²⁷

As long as the narrative form is used in historical writing, one cannot avoid literary elements of grammar, imagery, and style. Nevertheless, in conceptual and methodological aspects history, as a form of communication, is similar to empirical science. Instead of seeking to emote, history seeks to describe, classify, analyze, and understand. Proposition II of Bulletin 54 of the Social Science Research Council sanctions the historical drive toward the unique.²⁸ History is secular, humanistic, and skeptical, rejecting arbitrary mystery. While imagination has an important role to play in attempting an approximation of past actuality, it must serve the greater claims of fact, truth, and clarity.²⁹

Although history cannot be verified by means of measurement, the same difficulty belongs to the historical aspects of other empirical sciences. Franz Boas observes that, while there must have been a time when the mind of man was not superior to that of the higher apes of today, all extant men have much the same mentality. Obviously, scientists cannot "measure" the intelligence of some contemporary "man" who, while sub-human in mental capacity, is thought to be repeating the same evolutionary process as our remote ancestors underwent.³⁰

History, however, is not deprived of the possibility of empirical verification. One accepts Vilfredo Pareto's hypothesis concerning the influence

on prices of a sudden influx of money because of an opportunity to study the same data and arrive at the same conclusions.³¹ His hypothesis also enables prediction.

Although both the artist and the historian are confronted with the physical impossibility of reporting events in nature exactly as they happened, there are fundamental differences in the way each is permitted to report phenomena. One may reject Pablo Picasso's dictum: "Nature and art, being two different things, cannot be the same thing. Through art we express our conception of what nature is not."³² But it is more difficult to deny the contention of Benedetto Croce who believes that, rather than the artist imitating nature, what one has is a situation in which nature obeys the artistic imagination.³³

Even when nature served as a model for art, and when artists were most affected by scientific aspirations, artists consciously used the license to distort sensory impressions. Both Renaissance art³⁴ and that of the nineteenth century Impressionist school³⁵ are replete with such examples which are at the same time independent of the difficulties of drawing three-dimensional figures on a two-dimensional canvas.

It is twentieth century art which, by virtue of its predominant tendency to abstraction, has established a great chasm between painting and history. The art one calls abstract, geometric, non-figurative, or expressionistic is characterized by the rejection of nature, or the common sense impressions yielded by such objects as the human anatomy, still life, and landscape. The chief values of abstract art are based upon an appreciation of line and color, and the realization that these two combine to produce an aesthetic value in form and design.³⁶ Primacy is given not to the outer reality of things, but to the artist's emotional reactions to experience. Such indifference to the ordinary sense world produces sharp artistic deviations in matters precious to the historian, that is, human personality, subject matter, sensed space, and historical time. Leger aptly sums up the victory of modern art: "In painting, the strongest restraint has been that of subject-matter upon composition. . . . The impressionist freed color--we have carried their attempt forward and freed form and design. Subject-matter being at last done for, we were free."³⁷

It is now apparent that history may be considered as an empirical science because it shares with it these crucial characteristics:

- 1) There is an assumption of an orderly world, independent of man's thought processes, which can be explained through natural cause and effect.
- 2) It is uninterested in ontological reality, being preoccupied with physical and historical reality.
- 3) Its attitude is skeptical and undogmatic.
- 4) Excepting such postulates and attitudes, empirical science begins with sense data. As sense data, the historical document is less satisfactory than the flash of light for the physicist because it is a human being's idea of

the event itself. Yet, if we ask a physicist to explain Galileo's experiments with falling bodies, we perceive that his knowledge is historical knowledge.

5) Theory is needed to organize and give meaning to sense experience, but all such constructs must square with that of experience. For history, the theory of elites must account for the shifting class structure within Russia in the present century.

6) Empirical science may deal with unseen and unobservable elements, but they must be "latently observable." The historian customarily deals with unobservables, say the battle of Gettysburg, but it is "latently observable" in so far as there are documentary accounts, artifacts connected with it, and the existence of the battleground. And for a long time afterwards, there were survivors of the battle. All theory is tied to the level of perception.

7) Ideally, communication is as simple and direct as possible while at the same time adequately explaining the relation between event and theory, theory and event.

8) Empirical science is valued in so far as it yields an orderly and coherent account of the sense world and enables man to come to terms with it. This is generally interpreted by Western man as control over nature, or over self.

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Footnotes:

¹ Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves (editors), Artists on Art from the XIV to the XX Century (New York, 1945), 347.

² Reflections of a Physicist (New York, 1950), 81-82.

³ Science and the Common Understanding (New York, 1954), 24-25, 96-97.

⁴ "The Attack on the Historical Method," The Journal of Philosophy, xlii (1945), 323.

⁵ F. S. C. Northrop, The Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities (New York, 1947), 169-177.

⁶ "Abstraction and Empathy," in Melvin Rader (editor), A Modern Book of Aesthetics, An Anthology (New York, 1952), 458-459.

⁷ Philosophy of the Arts (Cambridge, 1950), 201.

⁸ Roger Fry, Vision and Design (New York, 1947), 33; Clive Bell, Art (London, 1949), 167.

⁹ Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities, 184. See also Henry Margenau, "The Competence and Limitations of Scientific Method," Journal of Operations Research Society of America, iii, 2 (May, 1955), 136-139.

¹⁰ Henry Margenau, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Interpretations of the Quantum Theory," Physics Today, vii, 10 (October, 1954), 8.

- 11 "Suggestions for the Better Correlation of Literature and Science," in M. F. Ashley Montagu (editor), Studies and Essays in the History of Science and Learning (New York, 1944), 244.
- 12 Henry Margenau, "The Competence and Limitations of Scientific Method," *loc. cit.*, 137, and The Nature of Physical Reality, a Philosophy of Modern Physics (New York, 1950), 297-298, 458; Northrop, Logic of the Sciences and the Humanities, 317.
- 13 Introductory Note to Croce's "Intuition and Expression," in Rader, Modern Book of Aesthetics, 92-93.
- 14 "Beauty and Imitation," in *ibid.*, 12. See also Benedetto Croce, Aesthetic, As Science of Expression and General Linguistic, Revised Edition (New York, 1953), 49-50.
- 15 Benjamin Rowland, Jr., Art in East and West. An Introduction Through Comparisons (Cambridge, 1954), 103-104.
- 16 Langdon Warner, The Enduring Art of Japan (Cambridge, 1952), 88.
- 17 Anada K. Coomaraswamy, The Transformation of Nature in Art (Cambridge, 1935), 28-29.
- 18 George Wald, "The Origin of Life," The Physics and Chemistry of Life, by the Editors of Scientific American (New York, 1955), 3, 21, 25.
- 19 The Nature of Physical Reality, 334-335. See also Hans Reichenbach, The Rise of Scientific Philosophy (Berkeley, 1951), 176-179, 186; Otto Oldenberg, Introduction to Atomic Physics (New York, 1954), 262-270.
- 20 Theory and Practice in Historical Study: A Report of the Committee on Historiography. Bulletin 54. Social Science Research Council (New York, 1946), 130.
- 21 Henri Pierrenne, "What Are Historians Trying to Do?" Methods in Social Sciences, A Case Book, edited by Stuart Rice, for the Committee on Scientific Methods in the Social Sciences of the Social Science Research Council (Chicago, 1931), 442.
- 22 F. J. Teggart, Theory and Processes of History (Berkeley, 1941), 173, 233-234, 238, 244. See also Ralph Turner, The Great Cultural Traditions, The Foundations of Civilization, 2 vols (New York, 1941), i, Preface, ix.
- 23 Theory and Practice in Historical Study. Bulletin 54, 112-115.
- 24 Ideas and Opinions . . . (New York, 1954), 323, 336.
- 25 DeWitt Parker, The Analysis of Art (New Haven, 1926), 104-105; John Hospers, Meaning and Truth in the Arts (Chapel Hill, 1946), 149.
- 26 T. E. Hulme, Speculations. Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, edited by Herbert Read (London, 1954), 149-150. See also R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (Oxford, England, 1947), 313-317.
- 27 Herbert Read, The Philosophy of Modern Art: Collected Essays (London, 1952), 39.
- 28 Theory and Practice in Historical Study. Bulletin 54, 134.

²⁹ For example, when Bert J. Loewenberg considers the position of historical relativists, he puts insistent demands upon them for explicit formulation and clarification of their assumptions, terminology, and logic. "Some Problems Raised by Historical Relativism," The Journal of Modern History, xxi (1949), 21.

³⁰ Primitive Art (Irvington-on-Hudson, 1951), 1.

³¹ The Mind and Society, 4 vols. (New York, 1935), iv, 1628.

³² Goldwater and Treves (editors), Artists on Art, 417.

³³ Aesthetic, 176.

³⁴ "The central idea of the Italian Renaissance is that of perfect proportion. In the human figure . . . this epoch strove to achieve the image of perfection at rest within itself." Heinrich Wölfflin, Principles of Art History . . . (New York, 1932), 9-10. See also Bernard Berenson, Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts (New York, 1948), 198-199.

³⁵ Frank P. Chambers, The History of Taste . . . (New York, 1932), 207. The movement culminated with Cezanne whose work was characterized by a lack of verisimilitude. Hulme, Essays on the Philosophy of Art, 100-101; Clive Bell, Since Cezanne (New York, 1948), 14.

³⁶ Read, Philosophy of Modern Art, 218; Hulme, Essays on the Philosophy of Art, 76-77.

³⁷ Goldman and Treves (editors), Artists on Art, 424. Much of the art of Léger is characterized by his "love of beauty of machinery." Alfred A. Barr, Jr., Masters of Modern Art (New York, 1954), 84-85.

EMINENT VICTORIANS AND
R. E. LEE: A CASE STUDY
IN CONTRASTS

ROBERT PARTIN

Since the end of the First World War, biography has flourished as never before in history. During this period almost twenty-five thousand biographies were published in America.¹ The influence of this boom has been twofold: On the one hand, it has immeasurably enriched biography--made it "indeed a house of many mansions"; for these works were of every conceivable type: biographies long and short, interpretative and narrative, eulogistic and defamatory, pure and impure, scholarly and superficial, and about "heroes and villains of every hue." On the other hand, the boom has made of "Biographical literature... a maze, without a plan."² This literary maze has often been covered by a fog of confusion. Literary cults and biographical schools--by dogmatically proclaiming and aggressively defending their pet theories and practices--have distorted truth, destroyed values, and confounded the confusion which inevitably accompanied so large and so varied a literature.³

When such confusion beclouds any branch of literature, it is proper for the students of that literature to concern themselves with the problem; and it is the purpose of this paper to examine the biography of this period and to suggest possible ways of lessening the confusion. For this study, all biographies are divided into two classes: the "new" revolutionary, interpretative, debunking "sketches" which flourished from 1918 to 1932, and the "post-new" counter-revolutionary, full character-portrayal, long biography which has dominated the field since 1932.⁴ For careful study, only two biographies have been selected: from the "new" biography, Lytton Strachey's Eminent Victorians, and from the "post-new," Douglas Southall Freeman's R. E. Lee.⁵

The selection of two from thousands of biographies is justified on the ground that these works are not only the most characteristic biographies of their respective schools, but also two of the most important biographies of the twentieth century. At any rate, these two works--poles apart in all important respects--furnish an interesting case study in contrast of all the factors and influences which have made biography of the last forty years so rich yet so confusing.

The most obvious difference in the two works is that of size. Eminent Victorians, the biography of four prominent individuals, is one slim volume,

containing only 351 pages; R. E. Lee, the life of a single individual, runs to four fat volumes, containing 2421 pages. "Cardinal Manning," the longest of Strachey's four sketches, contains only 131 pages; and "Dr. Arnold," the shortest, contains only 36 pages. That is, Freeman's work is almost seven times as long as Strachey's; and the life of Lee is more than eighteen times the length of Strachey's longest sketch and almost seventy times the length of the shortest.

These differences in length are indicative of the fundamental differences in the works. Strachey's work is short because his concept of biography was narrow and his method highly selective; Freeman's work is long because his concept of biography was broad and his method exhaustive.

For Strachey biography was first of all an art. But not only was biography an art, it was to him "the most delicate and humane of all the branches of the art of writing," an art which he proposed to rescue from the Victorian panegyrists and scrupulous narrators. He aimed to replace "those two fat volumes... of tedious panegyric" with his own artistic sketch.⁶ And because Strachey was first of all an artist, his masterpiece is first of all a work of art and not a scientific history.

Strachey's conception of the biographer as a historian and the historical methods which he employed in writing Eminent Victorians are made clear in his famous preface:

For ignorance is the first requisite of the historian.... It is not by direct method of a scrupulous narration that the explorer of the past can hope to depict that singular epoch. If he is wise, he will adopt a subtler strategy.... He will row out over that great ocean of material and lower down into it, here and there a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity.

In the passage above, the author of Eminent Victorians makes it plain that he will not tire himself with research or overwhelm the reader with historical facts. He also makes plain his method of appraising historical items. He is going to use, he tells us, "certain fragments of truth which took my fancy and lay to my hand." For Strachey, the first duty of a biographer was "To preserve... a becoming brevity...."⁸

Strachey openly displayed his scorn of research and the trappings of the historian's craft: there is not a footnote in the book, and the bibliographies are short indeed. Perhaps Strachey was, as his ardent admirers claimed, a profound scholar; but any rapidly reading graduate student should be able to read his references on Manning in less than a month and those on Arnold in less than a week.

As implied in the preface and made clear in the body of the work, Strachey's method was highly selective. Actually, before beginning Eminent Victorians (this too is implied in the preface and made clear in the body of

the work) Strachey drew a "straight-jacket design" and then selected subjects and "specimens" of their lives to fit his "Procrustean" plan, rejecting everything which did not take his fancy. And that which most often caught his fancy was "the colorful, the exotic, the eccentric."⁹

If Strachey did not employ the historical method, what method did he use? The answer is the psychological. Through psychological interpretation the biographer revealed what was not in the record. He did this by putting words into the mouth, thoughts into the mind, and hidden motives into the actions of his subject. Strachey was wiser and more restrained in the use of psychology than many of his disciples, but he is responsible for its wide use and misuse. His psychological method, like so much else in his art, suffered from narrowness; for, as one critic put it, "His psychology is a psychology of humors, all of character types etched with deepening bite around a few strongly defined traits."¹⁰

Within these narrow limits which Strachey deliberately set for himself, he was a master. He was a master of design, selection, arrangement, and above all, a master of style. His style has been described as one containing "mingled elegance and vitality" and "made exhilarating by the continuous sparkle of an impish and adroit irony." It has also been credited with possessing "the virtues of classicism: clarity, balance, concision."¹¹ Strachey's place as an artistic biographer has been cogently summarized by Andre Maurois: "Mr. Strachey... has the power of presenting his material in a perfect art form, and it is this form which is for him the first essential." Maurois also referred to Strachey's artistic creations as "exquisitely ironic terra-cottas."¹²

On the contrary, Freeman was first of all a historian. His biographical philosophy and method was in every way the opposite of Strachey's "ignorance is the first requisite of the historian" concept and his "little bucket" dipping techniques.¹³ In his research, he employed the "industry of a Ranke"; and, in his writing, he employed "the direct method of scrupulous narration," filling the work with "the rich abundance of his items" and all but overwhelming the reader with footnotes, appendixes and bibliographies. He spent twenty years in the preparation of his R. E. Lee.¹⁴ Certainly for Douglas Southall Freeman "brevity" was not "the first duty of the biographer."

Freeman too was a great artist. But his art he employed only after he had, with a scientist's skill and patience, uncovered the facts, all the facts to be found. His art pattern was in a broad sense an outgrowth of his historical methods; and it was not rigid but elastic--elastic enough to allow the original plan of R. E. Lee to grow from one to four volumes. Because Freeman's four volumes are nearly twenty-five hundred pages in length, many readers have overlooked "the moving beauty" of the work.¹⁵

Freeman's artistry consists of strong, beautiful, appropriate words; long resonant sentences; a richness of details; smooth flowing transitional

passages; excellent descriptions of moving and dramatic scenes; the selection and arrangement of materials; and in beautiful interpretative writing as, for example, "The Pattern of Life" at the end of Volume IV. The practice of keeping the reader always at Lee's side during the war serves to give the work an artistic unity.¹⁶ But it was Freeman's style that made R. E. Lee an artistic masterpiece. Not only did his admirers describe it in glowing terms, but even his bitterest critic, Professor T. Harry Williams, twenty years after its publication, wrote: "First in any listing of Freeman's virtues must be his literary style. Here was a historian who knew how to write. His pages are marked by grace, clarity, and eloquence."¹⁷

If Strachey's sketches in Eminent Victorians are best described as exquisite ironic terra-cottas, Freeman's R. E. Lee is best described as a magnificent Gothic cathedral. Both works are masterpieces of artistic biography and, as such, deserve to be placed among the great biographies of all time. But there was also a deep moral purpose behind Strachey's brilliant but bitter sketches and Freeman's stately monumental narrative.

Although Strachey denied, in his famous preface, that he had any "ulterior intentions" in writing the book, his spiritual aims are obvious to any one who studies the man and his work.¹⁸

Strachey not only hated the Victorians because they produced fat tedious volumes of biography; he hated them because, he believed, their hypocrisy, self-seeking, and muddled-headed emotionalism were responsible for bringing on the First World War.¹⁹ He also believed that if he did not destroy them and their whole way of life they would destroy him and his own "lofty ideals." Therefore, his major moral aim in writing Eminent Victorians was the complete destruction of the Victorian way of life and its replacement by his own "idealistic world"--a world of "Voltairianism."²⁰

Freeman's moral purpose was, if we may judge his purpose by what he did, to prove the truth of the Robert E. Lee legend and by proving it true to glorify the whole Victorian way of life. At least, his aim was to prove the moral superiority of those Victorian traits of character of which Lee was the noblest symbol. Certainly among the major moral purposes of Freeman's efforts was the attempt to show in Lee's life "a triumph of character over catastrophe."²¹

In a word, Eminent Victorians was a work of disillusionment and hate, in which Strachey was out to destroy his four subjects;²² R. E. Lee was a work of admiration and love in which Freeman's ultimate purpose, if not his preconceived one, was to show the actual Lee greater than the heroic legendary Lee.²³

How could these contemporary writers use biography--the historical facts of the lives of Victorians--for the accomplishment of antithetical moral purposes? Strachey and Freeman achieved their purposes through selection.

In order to achieve his devastating purpose, Strachey had to choose suitable characters, characters with both heroic and ridiculous elements in their lives. He chose four eminent Victorians, each of whom, like General Gordon, was "a contradictory person--even a little off his head, perhaps, though a hero."²⁴ He gave all four the ice and acid treatment. He employed his famous ironic method with "an adroit mingling of contempt and comedy," and throughout the work he assumed a false air of scientific objectivity.²⁵

Having marked the Victorian Age for destruction and having selected the method and the human "specimen" to be used in its accomplishment, Strachey proceeded to dip out and use those "little buckets" of materials which fitted his narrow design; that is, material which revealed the ridiculous or evil side of his subjects. And Strachey, as one of his admirers recently wrote, "had a remarkable quickness in discovering the ridiculous and pouncing upon it."²⁶

There are many descriptions of what Strachey did in order to turn his readers against the Victorians. The following is one of the most recent and one of the most vivid:

From the moment we begin the preface, with its deadly pianissimo opening--"Ignorance is the first requisite of the historian"--Strachey's brilliant softening up method begins to work on us. Stunned by epigrams, punch-drunk with the dazzling lethal impudence of the four portraits, we stagger through round after round of the ironic imagination--depreciating, sarcastic, erudite, farcical, mock-sententious--until finally in the last sentence of the book comes that magnificent knock out foul blow.²⁷

Edgar Johnson had the feeling that Strachey's sketches "are not portrayal, but persecution" and that his facts were "not fabricated, but manipulated."²⁸

Strachey manipulated his facts to suggest the utter futility of the Christian, the philanthropic, the educational, and the patriotic efforts of the Victorians. The manipulation process is carried on throughout the book, but the most "instructive" examples of it are found in the concluding passages of "Cardinal Manning" and "The End of General Gordon."

Here are the final sentences of "Cardinal Manning":

The Cardinal's memory is a dim thing to-day. And he who descends into the crypt of the Cathedral which Manning never lived to see, will observe, in the quiet niche with the sepulchral monument, that the dust lies thick on the strange, the incongruous, the almost impossible object which, with its elaborations of dependent tassels, hangs down from the dim vault like some forlorn and forgotten trophy--the Hat.²⁹

The last glimpse of Gordon suggests the same futility as does his last reference to Manning, with the added element of horror. After Gordon had

been killed and his head taken to his mortal enemy, the Mahdi, Strachey gives the reader a last glimpse of the face of one of England's heroes. "The trophy was taken to the Mahdi: at last the two fanatics had indeed met face to face. The Mahdi ordered the head to be fixed between the branches of a tree in the public highway, and all who passed threw stones at it. The hawks of the desert swept and circled about it. . . ."30

Thus, as Strachey appraised their influence, manipulating his facts to suggest this to his readers, Manning left nothing for the inspiration and guidance of future generations except a dust-covered trophy, the Hat; and Gordon left nothing but a blood-covered trophy, his head.

Freeman was as skillful in defense of the Victorians as Strachey was in their prosecution, and he was more industrious. Since R. E. Lee was a biography of almost "unchallengeable completeness,"³¹ Freeman did not practice Strachey's method of rigid selection. Nevertheless, it is through selection and presentation that he too achieves his aims. To begin with, he selected Lee because he admired him. He employed selection of material to justify Lee's action as a soldier and he certainly employed selection to enhance his character.³²

Freeman did not ignore damaging evidence against the man he so much admired. He simply used the undamaging evidence which he discovered to bury the mole hill of Lee's faults under a mountain of his virtues. Dumas Malone suggests how Freeman created his desired effects:

From this carefully wrought and slowly-moving story Lee emerges in full glory. This is not to say that he was impeccable in judgment; Freeman describes his mistakes with complete candor at the time he made them and sums them up in a final critique--the chapter entitled "The Sword of Robert E. Lee." Also he underlines the General's chief temperamental flaw, his excessive amiability at times in dealing with his commanders. But the balance is heavily on the credit side. . . .³³

Freeman, like Strachey, used the last passage in the work to bring home a message. After giving, in the last chapter of Volume IV, "The Pattern of Life," the deeds and principles which had shaped the life of this great Christian soldier, Freeman closed his monumental biography with this:

And if one, only one of all the myriad incidents of his stirring life had to be selected to typify his message, as a man, to the young Americans who stood in hushed awe that rainy October morning as their parents wept at the passing of the Southern Arthur, who would hesitate in selecting that incident? It occurred in Northern Virginia, probably on his last visit there. A young mother brought her baby to him to be blessed. He took the infant in his arms and looked at it and

then at her and slowly said, "Teach him he must deny himself."

That is all. There is no mystery in the coffin there in front of the windows that look to the sunrise.³⁴

In contrast to the message of utter futility which Strachey has Manning and Gordon leave for future generations, Freeman has Lee leave for "young Americans" and "their parents" as guidance in this world, a pattern of life as pure and as noble as that of King Arthur. And also the lesson, at least the suggestion, that high aspirations and noble efforts did not end in the tomb; for after death, there is the resurrection.

Thus in brief is a review of the wholly different works which we, in the beginning, assumed were symbolic of the richness and the confusion of modern biography. Let us now examine the effects of the two works on modern biography and life, their standing today, and their possible influence on future biography.

Eminent Victorians was in 1918 a revolutionary work, and its publication precipitated a violent and prolonged literary war--a war which raged in violent form throughout the twenties and early thirties and has not yet altogether ended.³⁵ Admirers gave extravagant praise to the book, declaring among many other things that with its publication "Lytton Strachey... captured biography for art" and in so doing destroyed the superficial and pretentious Victorian morality.³⁶ But detractors violently attacked Strachey and his work. Strachey was condemned for his lack of patriotism, his lack of sympathy, his anti-Catholic point of view, his bitterness, his inaccuracies, and his narrowness. He was called among many other things "the Nietzsche among biographers," "an evil old Bloomsbury gossip," and "the subtilist beast in England." The influence of the book was declared by some to be wholly bad.³⁷

Actually, Strachey's influence has been both beneficial and pernicious. It has been beneficial because, with the publication of Eminent Victorians, he destroyed the sacchrine Victorian panegyric which was neither art nor history; he succeeded in making biography more interesting, more artistic, more popular, and, in the long run, more truthful.³⁸ For example, there is considerable circumstantial evidence to show that R. E. Lee is a greater work because of Eminent Victorians.³⁹ On the other hand, Strachey inspired a host of incompetent imitators, who within a decade turned the "new" movement into a "Freudian frolic" of general debunkery and over-emphasis on sex.⁴⁰

R. E. Lee, as already noted, was also a literary sensation; it too made the best-seller lists.⁴¹ It has been more lavishly and more universally praised than any other biography of modern times. Henry Steel Commager voiced the opinions of many others when he called it "one of the great biographies of our literature."⁴²

But Freeman too had his detractors. He was criticized for his over-zealous attention to detail, for his dullness, for his pro-Southern sentiments and worshipful attitude toward Lee, for his lack of interpretation, for his ignorance of war activities outside the Virginia theatre, and for his errors of judgment, especially regarding military affairs.⁴³

Although Freeman did not have a flock of week-end biographers rushing to the publishing houses will ill-concealed imitations, as Strachey did--R. E. Lee is not as easy to imitate as "Cardinal Manning"--the influence of the work was more profound and lasting. Freeman's work influenced not only the new scholarly biographers, but it profoundly influenced some of Strachey's erstwhile ardent admirers, the most famous of these being Andre Maurois.⁴⁴

The author of R. E. Lee restored respectability to biography and did much to stop the wholesale debunking of heroes. He achieved this by doing two things: First, in this work, Freeman demonstrated that a "monumental biography" of "scrupulous narration," though it ran to twice two "fat volumes," could also be art of the highest order. Second, in that difficult field of moral didacticism in biography, he demonstrated that all our heroes do not necessarily drop from their pedestals and break their feet of clay the moment the historian reveals the true facts of their lives. Freeman proved that Lee's feet were not made of clay and that the moral ground upon which he stood was firm. Indeed, he proved that the real flesh and blood Lee was greater than the legendary hero of the South.

As for the relative greatness of Eminent Victorians and R. E. Lee, if we may accept the opinion of a panel of literary judges, one is not greater than the other. They are different, representing different methods of revealing truth--truth as diverse as human nature, as varied as the hearts and minds of authors.

Today their positions still stand in bold contrast. What was said of Freeman a few years ago seems still to be true: "Long before his life ended, Douglas Freeman had become a name and a legend. He sat in Richmond surrounded by a vast admiration without parallel in modern historiography."⁴⁵ The admiration for Strachey is not vast; but among "discerning readers," who love "art and beauty" and the liberal humanistic tradition it is strong, deep and lasting.⁴⁶ What will be the place of Strachey and Freeman in the future of biography?

As long as the art of biography shall endure--and John Garraty recently predicted that biography would outlast "the seven hills of Rome"⁴⁷--it will always stand in need of both Stracheys and Freemans. If biography continues its rhythmical course, its ebbing and flowing with changing times, the future roles of such men seem clear. Whenever the art of biography falls, as it did in the years around 1918, upon evil days--smothered by piousness, hypocrisy, sweetness, and large quantities of ill-digested materials--a Lytton Strachey will be needed to step into the biographical house, puncture

pomposity with the "hygiene of laughter," cast out those articles of "funereal barbarism," and fumigate the place with his acid wit. Likewise, when the ignorant, incompetent, lazy and dishonest disciples of a future Strachey fill the house with their own abnormal heroes and their own literary and moral rubbish, a Douglas Southall Freeman will again be needed to write "noble books about noble men" and to overwhelm the false biography with truth and a larger art.⁴⁸

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Footnotes:

¹ There were published in America during the years 1920-39, 11,382 biographies. The Publishers' Weekly: The American Book Trade Journal, cxxxix (January 18, 1941), 232. Since 1939, there have been published approximately 13,000 biographies. This estimate was made from information in ibid., cxli (January 3, 1942), 66 ff., clxxvii (January 18, 1960), 74, passim.

² Allan Nevins, "How Shall One Write a Man's Life?" New York Times Book Review (July 15, 1951); Dumas Malone, "Biography and History," The Interpretation of History, Joseph R. Strayer, ed. (Princeton, 1943), 145-48; and Thomas Seccombe, "The Reading of Biography," The Living Age, ccc (February 19, 1919), 435. Seccombe made his statement about the maze of biography at the very beginning of the period, but almost forty years later John A. Garraty, still found biographers in a maze, at least, as to the theories and practices of writing it. Garraty, "How to Write a Biography," The South Atlantic Quarterly, lv (January, 1956), 73-86.

³ Garraty, "How to Write a Biography," 73-86; and The Nature of Biography (New York, 1957), 121-52. See also Dana Kinsman Merrill, American Biography: Its Theory and Practice (Portland, Maine: The Bowker Press, 1957), 205-47.

⁴ For an explanation of why these dates were selected as marking the beginning and ending of these eras, see Robert Partin, "Biography as an Instrument of Moral Instruction," American Quarterly, viii (Winter, 1956), 303-5, 309.

⁵ Eminent Victorians (New York, 1918); R. E. Lee: A Biography (4 vols.; New York, 1934-35).

⁶ Strachey, v-vii.

⁷ Ibid., v.

⁸ Ibid., vii.

⁹ Leonard Bacon, "An Eminent Post-Victorian," Yale Review, xxx (December, 1940), 321-22; George Dangerfield, "Lytton Strachey," The Saturday Review of Literature, xviii (July 23, 1938), 3; and Charles Rich-

ard Sanders, "Lytton Strachey's 'Point of View,'" PMLA, lxxviii (March, 1953), 84.

¹⁰ Edgar Johnson, A Treasury of Biography (New York, 1941), 452.

¹¹ The Dictionary of National Biography, 1931-1940 (London, 1949), 836; Johnson, 452.

¹² Andre Maurois, Aspects of Biography, tr. by Sidney Castle Roberts (New York, 1929), 18.

¹³ For a fuller expression of Strachey's attitude toward history and historians, see Strachey, Portraits in Miniature and Other Essays (New York, 1931), 139-214, passim.

¹⁴ Even a casual examination of R. E. Lee will reveal the exhaustive nature of Freeman's methods. For brief explanations of certain aspects of Freeman's historical methods, see the Foreword in volume one of R. E. Lee; the Introduction in volume one of George Washington; Dumas Malone, "The Pen of Douglas Southall Freeman," and Mary Wells Ashworth, "Prefatory Note" in volume six of George Washington.

¹⁵ Henry Steel Commager, "New Books in Review: The Life of Lee," Yale Review, xxiv (Spring, 1935), 597.

¹⁶ For Freeman's explanation of the use of the practice, see R. E. Lee, I, ix; for a criticism of its use, see T. Harry Williams, "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War: An Appraisal," The Journal of Southern History, xxi (February, 1955), 91-100; for a criticism of Williams' criticism, see Joseph H. Harrison, Jr., "Harry Williams, Critic of Freeman: A Demurrer," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, lxiv, 1 (January, 1956), 70-7.

¹⁷ Williams, "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War," 92.

¹⁸ For a brief explanation of the inconsistencies between Strachey's avowed objectivity and his obvious subjectivity, see Partin, "Biography as an Instrument of Moral Instruction," 305-6.

¹⁹ Johnson, p. 451; Harold Nicolson, The Development of English Biography (London, 1928), 149-50.

²⁰ Sanders, "Lytton Strachey's 'Point of View,'" 94.

²¹ Freeman, George Washington, I, xv, xxvi.

²² For an explanation of how Strachey achieved his purpose, see John Raymond, "Books in General, Reassessments: Strachey's Eminent Victorians," The New Statesman and Nation, xlix (April 16, 1956), 545-46.

²³ For a criticism of Freeman's "too worshipful" attitude toward Lee, see Williams, "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War," 96-7.

²⁴ Strachey, 350.

²⁵ Johnson, 451-54.

²⁶ Sanders, "Lytton Strachey's 'Point of View,'" 91.

²⁷ Raymond, "Books in General, Reassessments: Strachey's Eminent Victorians," 545.

²⁸ Johnson, 453.

- 29 Strachey, 130.
- 30 Ibid., 347-8.
- 31 Malone, "The Pen of Douglas Southall Freeman," xx.
- 32 Freeman, I, ix.
- 33 Malone, "The Pen of Douglas Southall Freeman," xx.
- 34 Freeman, IV, 505.
- 35 For a discussion of biography since 1918, see Garraty, Nature of Biography, 121-52; and for a list of sources covering the same period, see ibid., 273-79.
- 36 Marston Balch, Modern Short Biographies (New York, 1936), 42; William York Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature, 1885-1946 (New York, 1947), 129; Edmund Wilson, The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twenties and Thirties (New York, 1952), 551; and Nicholson, 149-50.
- 37 Editorial in Literature and Art Section, "Is there a Menace of Literary Prussianism? Further Protest Against the 'Spirit of Sheer Brutality' Exhibited by Lytton Strachey," Current Opinion, lxx (October, 1918), 253; Bacon, "An Eminent Post-Victorian," 319; and F. L. Lucas, "Persons and Personages," Living Age, cccxlii (March, 1942), 38.
- 38 For a rather full but sympathetic treatment of Strachey's influence, see Sanders, Lytton Strachey, 337-54.
- 39 Freeman was evidently well acquainted with the "new" biography which, in his opinion, was "already becoming conventionalized." R. E. Lee, I, ix. To this writer, Chapter one of Volume I reads like "new" biography, especially the opening paragraphs; and, likewise, the closing paragraphs of Volume IV, in spite of the totally different message, suggest the closing paragraphs of "Cardinal Manning" and "The End of General Gordon."
- 40 For an excellent discussion of the extent of this degeneracy, see Ernest Boyd, "Sex in Biography," Harpers Magazine, clxv (November, 1932), 752-59.
- 41 Malone, "Biography and History," 140.
- 42 Commager, "New Books in Review: The Life of Lee," 594.
- 43 For an early criticism of Freeman, see Liddell Hart, "Why Lee Lost Gettysburg," The Saturday Review of Literature, xi (March 23, 1935), 561-70. For a recent criticism of Freeman, see Williams, "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War: An Appraisal," 91-100.
- 44 For Maurois' changed attitude, see Maurois, "To Make a Man Come Alive Again," New York Times Book Review, December 27, 1953, 1.
- 45 Williams, "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War: An Appraisal," 91.
- 46 Sanders, Lytton Strachey, 352-53.
- 47 Garraty, Nature of Biography, 259.
- 48 For suggestions of their places in the future, see Sanders, Lytton Strachey, 352-53; and Malone, "The Pen of Douglas Southall Freeman, xxxi.

RAYMOND CHANDLER'S LAST
NOVEL: SOME OBSERVATIONS
ON THE "PRIVATE EYE"
TRADITION

HAROLD OREL

At one moment in that popular "private eye" novel of 1942, The High Window, the hero refers to himself as a "cockeyed, careless, clubfooted, dissipated investigator." Philip Marlowe knows that the odds are against him. "See me and you meet the best cops in town," he muses. "Why despair? Why be lonely? Call Marlowe and watch the wagon come."

The frustration implicit in such name-calling of one's self is, however, a passing mood. Marlowe knows that he is not so hopeless as all that. He knows it because he knows who he is, and what he believes in. His ethics are consistent and an awesome thing to watch, because this cock-eyed and careless investigator succeeds where the police fail, and does so because, being true to himself, he cannot then be false to any man. When he lectures a cynical Detective-Lieutenant, Jesse Breeze, his anger flares up: "Until you guys own your own souls you don't own mine. Until you guys can be trusted every time and always, in all times and conditions, to seek the truth out and find it and let the chips fall where they may--until that time comes, I have a right to listen to my conscience, and protect my client the best way I can. Until I'm sure you won't do him more harm than you'll do the truth good. Or until I'm hauled before somebody that can make me talk."

Philip Marlowe, the legitimate heir of Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade, talked like that in a series of fast-moving, tightly-plotted novels: The Big Sleep (1939), Farewell, My Lovely (1940), The Lady in the Lake (1943), The Little Sister (1949), and The Long Goodbye (1954). To these has been added a sixth, and final adventure: Playback (1958). About this, more shall be said soon. But Marlowe was always an island of decency in a world of stormy seas, a conscience. In the disintegrating world of the late 1930's, in the terrible years of crisis of the 1940's, he moved steadily ahead, setting in order whatever might be salvaged from the mess people persisted in making of their lives.¹

Raymond Thornton Chandler, who created him, was the son of Quaker parents, one Anglo-Irish, the other Pennsylvanian, who divorced each other while he was still a child. His mother returned to England and became a British national, although he retained his American citizenship. He re-

ceived his education in England, France, and Germany, and only a lack of money prevented him from becoming a barrister (although he never gave up the desire). He free-lanced as a journalist in London. It is hard to think of Chandler publishing poetry, but so he did, until the first World War, when he served as a member of the Canadian forces and in the Royal Air Force, after which he worked in an English bank in San Francisco. He was developing his capacity to hate. Of this period he later wrote: "...I think I then, for the first time, began to dislike the kind of English who don't live in England, don't want to live in England, but bloody well want to wave their Chinese affectations of manner and accent in front of your nose as if it was some kind of rare incense instead of a distillation of cheap suburban snobbery which is just as ludicrous in England as it is here." An executive in an oil corporation until the Day of Wrath (1929), he returned to a literary career in 1933. Within a few years he had found his message.

The elegant stylization of the Marlowe novels is worth considering before we turn to Playback. What, then, are the conventions?

First: the dialogue is tough, the men are tough, the women are tough. "Toughness" means, simply, that the characters assume a great deal about the nature of society and the sinfulness of the individuals who compose it; they take so much for granted that they have no time for small talk. "I don't like your manners," a man named Kingsley says (The Lady in the Lake). Marlowe's answer is calculated to worsen relations: "That's all right. I'm not selling it." Gentle people would disintegrate in this world. Hence, there are few gentle people around.

Second: nobody ever tells the whole truth. In the old-fashioned detective story, characters would tell the truth: at least to the extent that they understood it. But Marlowe's client will not confide in him, those who have something to hide from the law will not be honest with him, and those who don't have anything to hide can hardly trust a man who operates in an ambiguous relationship to the forces of established law. Marlowe must fit in pieces and ends as best he can.

Third: The police are brutal or corruptible, or both; or stupid. Since the recognizable locale of Raymond Chandler's novels is Los Angeles, readers who live in that area must have felt uneasy for years about accidentally running afoul of the law. When Marlowe, on one occasion, admits to being a private operative, a policeman groans, "Cripes, that means everything" will be all balled up." Marlowe, delighted that the cop has made a sensible remark, grins at him affectionately. His relations with the police are never easy. He discovers dead bodies under suspicious circumstances; he usually knows more than he tells; even if the police are unable to hang murder raps on him, they are not averse to trying to beat the truth out of him. They believe that the shortest distance between two points would be a straight line if only Marlowe did not interfere. Their theories about motivation and char-

acter are uncomplicated and simple-hearted. As mean-tempered men of action, they resent the intellectual approach to crime. Marlowe delays as long as he can any cooperation with the law. And he is never surprised by a policeman's delight in sadism.

Fourth: Marlowe cannot be bought. He once reveals why he refuses to spend a five-thousand-dollar bill in his safe (The Long Goodbye): there was something wrong with the way he got it. "I hear voices crying in the night," Marlowe says to Bernie Ohls, who has asked him what he does for eating money, "and I go see what's the matter. You don't make a dime that way. You got sense, you shut your windows and turn up more sound on the TV set. Or you shove down on the gas and get far away from there. Stay out of other people's troubles. All it can get you is the smear...." But Bernie, not understanding, answers: "You know something, kid? You think you're cute but you're just stupid. You're a shadow on the wall." Marlowe will not do anything that he expects to be ashamed of at three o'clock in the morning.

Fifth: crime is a fact of life. "We do not live in a fragrant world -- gangsters can rule cities, perhaps even nations; a screen star can be the fingerman of a mob; the mayor of your town may have condoned murder as an instrument of money-making...." One eats, or one is eaten. The jungle is filled with lions looking for their prey. The night air trembles with the disregarded shrieks of the dying. No man is safe on the streets of a city. Crime is not a disease so much as a symptom, says Marlowe. "We're a big rough rich wild people and crime is the price we pay for it, and organized crime is the price we pay for organization." Knowing that, he can only scrape away at dirt on the underside of the sharp dollar. And he feels contempt for the courts which cooperate with the criminals. "Let the law enforcement people do their own dirty work. Let the lawyers work it out. They write the laws for other lawyers to dissect in front of other lawyers called judges so that other judges can say the first judges were wrong and the Supreme Court can say the second lot were wrong. Sure there's such a thing as law. We're up to our necks in it. About all it does is make business for lawyers. How long do you think the big-shot mobsters would last if the lawyers didn't show them how to operate?" To which his listener -- unsurprised, not disagreeing, but annoyed by the irrelevance of Marlowe's speech to the problem he wants to talk about -- protests, "That has nothing to do with it."

These attitudes make meaningful a great deal of the action, even if Raymond Chandler was in the business of providing entertainment.² Marlowe, a shop-soiled Galahad, says these things because he believes them. Edmund Wilson, in that notorious attack on detective stories, "Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?" correctly identified the subject-matter of Chandler's fiction as "a malaise conveyed to the reader, the horror of a hidden conspir-

acy that is continually turning up in the most varied and unlikely forms." What Wilson saw in Farewell, My Lovely was an American version of the Alfred Hitchcock-Graham Greene spy story. And Chandler himself argued in The Simple Art of Murder (1950) that a crime is not half so important as its effect on the characters, and that the reactions of the people to the crime are what makes the story. His concern was with the meaning of crime.

Playback, however, cruelly caricatures its predecessors. Its toughness is exaggerated and unconvincing. Chandler, some years ago, described how easy it is to fake the realistic style: "Brutality is not strength, flipness is not wit, edge-of-the-chair writing can be as boring as flat writing. . . ." Haste, lack of awareness, inability to bridge the chasm that lies between what a writer would like to be able to say and what he actually knows how to say, contribute to a decadent style. The plot is needlessly complicated, and the truth, even when we learn it, doesn't seem to matter. The murder is less interesting than we had hoped. The means of disposing of the body is tiresomely improbable; a helicopter, and the fact that a prime suspect knows how to fly one, are mentioned for the first time in the next-to-last chapter.

Chandler seems to be uncertain of his subject-matter. The police turn out to be efficient, lovable, honest, and polite. Marlowe even thanks them for the way they treat him. Captain Alessandro says, "We're not tough. We just have a job to do." Really, it is all too much.

Marlowe refuses \$5,000 in American Express checks so many times, this reader lost count; he refuses money from other people for services he has rendered; he spends his own money for everything. But the worst is yet to come: the sex is gratuitous, and Marlowe turns out to be unexpectedly seedy. One chapter ends with the heroine sobbing, "Take me. I'm yours. Take me." It is dreary trash, and the reviewers, understandably, express their dismay. Anthony Boucher complains that after a wait of four and a half years, "It's a mousy labor from such a mountain" (The New York Times); Charles Rolo misses the climate of malevolence and danger, the exotic characterizations, the driving pace and imaginative mayhem that made Chandler's earlier books so interesting (The Atlantic); and W. L. Webb reports that the new Chandler "shows symptoms of a serious decline" (The Manchester Guardian).

The thing that went wrong, of course, is the fact that Marlowe no longer is up to date. Raymond Chandler, when he died on March 26, 1959, had already passed his threescore and ten, and his version of the "private eye" depended upon one's intimate knowledge of the decades of Depression, Fascism, and War. By the late 1950's, the Depression had worked itself out, and Marlowe's occupation, like Othello's, had gone. There is everywhere in Playback the suspicion that private detectives are unnecessary because

the police know how to handle crime. Very early in the novel Marlowe asks a cab-driver to follow the car ahead of him. He is asked to prove that he is a private detective, officially licensed. The cab-driver reports the fact to his dispatcher, who in turn reports it to the Police Business Office. "That's the way it is here, chum," says the hack (all this for a tail job). It is now possible, in short, to see clear lines of demarcation between the criminals and the honest citizens. Indeed, sometimes it is hard to see the criminals because of the crowds of honest citizens. The pale-faced red-head with dead eyes who tries to ambush Marlowe is incompetent, and provides no trouble. The point is worth making more strongly: there is no trouble in the novel worth Marlowe's time.

Raymond Chandler, thinking out loud about the reasons he wrote low-life fiction, said that he refused to look at life as though it were a full-page ad in Collier's or the Post; he had gone to the pulps to study writing, and had been attracted to the kind of story-telling he found there; and third, "and possibly the best reason of all," "this elaborate overtooled civilization of ours" had just struck him that way. "The story of our time to me," he said, "is not war nor atomic energy but the marriage of an idealist to a gangster and how their home life and children turned out." In Playback it is almost as if the children have grown up and are now attending college. One finds it difficult to accept the possibility that Philip Marlowe's adventures are becoming period pieces, but there will certainly be no more of them, and the atmosphere of the 1960's, despite all that we hear about atomic radiation, Cold War, and the population explosion, is considerably more relaxed, considerably more comfortable, for most Americans than the atmosphere of the 1930's and 1940's. A pity. For the "private eye," while he lasted, was one of the most exciting and original creations of our literature.

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Footnotes:

¹ "He is everyman's romantic conception of himself: the glorification of toughness, irreverence, and a sense of decency too confused and almost half-ashamed to show itself." John Paterson, "A Cosmic View of the Private Eye," Saturday Review of Literature (Aug. 22, 1953), 31.

² He worked as a Hollywood script-writer: Double Indemnity (1944) and The Blue Dahlia (1946). His battered "op" plays chess. Bright-eyed, sensual, eager women turn up in the most unexpected places. And the jackets of the paperback editions of his novels are appropriately vulgar, suggesting that Chandler may have had doubts about the intellectual abilities of his audience. The Long Goodbye carries the legend, "She had six husbands, money -- and one lover too many."

MORE COMMENTS BY HENRI HERZ
ON MUSICAL TASTE IN NINETEENTH
CENTURY AMERICA

HENRY BERTRAM HILL AND
LARRY GARA

Among that sizeable group of barnstorming virtuosi who turned a quick buck in the American market at various times during the nineteenth century was Henri Herz (1806-1888), composer, racanteur, concert pianist, teacher, piano manufacturer and author. No sane critic has ever accused Herz of being in the same league with Dvorak as a composer, or of comparing his stature as a performer with that of the legendary Jenny Lind or even with that of the remarkable violinist Ole Bull. Nor did he have P. T. Barnum as impresario, as did Miss Lind, although his manager, Bernard Ulmann, does seem to have had both a sense of flamboyant showmanship and a good working understanding of the naiveté of the American audience. But Herz received his share of adulation, remained in the country for the better part of a decade, and turned his experience to further profit by writing about it on returning to Europe. A Viennese by birth, Herz lived most of his life in France, where he published his American observations first in newspapers and then in a popular book, *Mes voyages en Amerique* (Paris, 1886). The passages which follow are translated from that work, and are published here for the first time in English. Other comments by Herz were published in this journal last year [Spring, 1960, 17-22].

--SGL

Musical taste in America has improved in recent years, so I hear. At the time when I traveled in the United States, however, artistic appreciation in general, and that of music in particular, left much to be desired, in spite of several good philharmonic societies and the efforts of a number of good musicians to popularize the works of the masters. For example, one day at a music store I witnessed the exhibition of a new method of testing pianos of which, up until then, I was totally ignorant. A lady entered the store saying that she wanted to buy a piano and wished to see what they had. Three pianos were shown to her. The lady energetically grasped her parasol by the handle and with the other end rapidly poked the keyboard of the first piano.

"The bass is good," she said majestically, "but I do not like the treble." (Her parasol had not touched the treble.) Turning toward the second piano she sent the tip of her parasol flying in the opposite direction, beginning toward the middle of the keyboard and descending to the lowest note.

"The high notes on this one are nice," she said, with the same aplomb and the same majestic tone, "but the bass is weak. Let's see the third piano."

This time she ran her parasol violently to the right and left across the keyboard, producing a confusion of loud sounds with a most disagreeable effect.

"Very well," she exclaimed enthusiastically, "this one is good in every respect and I will take it."

Just after this woman left the store I noticed a piece of music on the cover of which I read: Sonntags Walse, by Henri Herz. I turned the page; the piece was not one of my compositions.

"What is this?" I angrily asked the proprietor.

"What a question! It is the piece on which your reputation in America rests. Your other compositions are liked fairly well; this one is considered the brightest jewel in your crown of harmonies."

I would have liked to decline that honor, but Ulmann, divining my intention, took me to one side.

"Do not deny that you composed it," he said to me, "You will only upset him, and you won't be believed anyway."

I followed my secretary's advice, and if I still enjoy any fame in certain parts of America today it is probably due to the Sonntags Walse.

This is perhaps the place at which I should speak at some length about the music trade and the manufacturing of pianos in America. In all honesty I must report that the music trade is extensive, and that if the making of pianos has for some time left much to be desired, it is necessary to make an exception of Chickering pianos, which have an international reputation. Without having that great equality of tone, that homogeneity of timbre, and especially that power, that sweetness, and that distinction which make our leading French pianos the best in the world, the Chickering instruments do not lack brilliance, and their grand concert models can compete with English grand pianos whose good features they most resemble. I am speaking of grand pianos and square pianos, for the United States will probably be dependent for a long time on Europe for upright pianos, the production of which forms the principal branch of the French industry. For many years the English have let the best pianos be produced by foreign countries and the renown thus won has resulted in a wide distribution of their products. Today, those pianos we make expressly for America are regarded as superior not only in construction but also in the brilliance and harmoniousness of their timbre.

An artist-author who has lived for several years in North America has rightly observed that not only do the sudden changes in temperature have an annoying effect on certain pianos, but, what is more important, that the excessive heat from the furnaces used to warm rooms in the northern United States seriously damages pianos. Several Frenchmen have carried to New York and Boston pianos made for use in France, where the inconvenience of having furnaces does not exist, and these pianos have quickly got out of order. Because of this, Americans have concluded that French pianos were poorly made, or at least that they could not withstand the American climate. They have as a result combined in a common misunderstanding both good and bad instruments; those which we make for France and those which we make for export; as well as those which are made to sell at a low price by manufacturers without name or integrity, and those produced by our better known houses whose reputation is universally acclaimed.

I have said that the music business was considerable everywhere in the United States. There are, in fact, several publishers with stocks of sheet music running up as high as 200,000 pieces. This music, passably engraved and well printed, supplies the major needs of the country. Since up to the present the Americans have signed none of the international treaties protecting literary and musical property, they can publish with impunity all the works which appear in Europe, without paying any attention to the author's rights. This unjust privilege would result in a much more decisive advantage in the competitive market if the labor cost, generally higher in America than in Europe, did not balance things.

For Ulmann, financial music was music arranged for eight or ten pianos, which everywhere in America had the gift of drawing crowds, especially when the theme of the concert consisted of national airs. We had to give in to my intelligent secretary, and financial music, arranged for eight pianos and sixteen pianists recruited among the young ladies of Louisiana society, produced its customary results. There was a crowd to hear this harmonious squadron of fashionable ladies, all of them pretty and roundly applauded, as one would expect.

The selection played by sixteen pianists had produced such an effect that another concert was demanded. So we repeated the performance, this time for the benefit of the city's poor. The receipts were over \$4,000, or about 20,000 francs. For such accomplishments this form of music well merited the flattering title, financial music, which Ulmann had given to it. This last concert, however, was accompanied by a little episode which deserves to be told. At the moment when I was about to give the signal to begin the introduction and all the participating ladies were seated two by two at the pianos, I noticed that one of the pianists was missing. It was less the fingers of the absent pianist that I missed than the elegantly dressed young lady whose absence marred the symmetry which would otherwise meet the eyes of the audience. What was to be done? Great misfortunes

require great remedies, says the proverb, and you are about to learn of the great remedy to which I made recourse to meet so great a misfortune. I looked around the hall, and spotting, seated in a box, a young lady in evening dress I had once met, I walked boldly up to her.

"Madam," I said to her, "a most unfortunate thing has occurred, and I will be lost if you do not save me."

"Save you, sir!" she said, "How could that be?"

"By taking the place of the pianist who has failed to appear."

"You think I could, sir? Why I cannot play the piano at all."

"That doesn't matter. Any good musician..."

"But I am not in the least a musician."

"Ah, me! Are you telling the truth?"

"I swear it."

"Well, it doesn't matter. Even if you cannot play the piano and have no notion of musicianship you can take the place of the absent pianist without trouble."

"Are you really serious, sir?"

"I am speaking seriously, madam."

"And what do you want me to do with a piano I do not know how to play?"

"Nothing at all."

"I can't understand you."

"It is simple. You will run your hands over the keyboard, gracefully as you do everything, lightly touching the keys but making no sound. People will think they are hearing you, and what is paramount in this instance, they will see you. Thus you will combine all the advantages, for in this way you will never sound a false note as many, too many, pianists do, and you will assuredly please all who look at you. There is, after all, a music for the eyes, and in that kind of music, madam, you are a virtuoso."

"But, sir, what you ask of me is simply impossible."

"I say, madam, that nothing is easier."

"I would be ridiculous."

"That madam, is something you could never be."

"If I only knew a little music..."

"Then you would be afraid."

"But what would my friends say?"

"They will say that you have a great interest in the poor and that you saved me from great embarrassment."

"And if some time they ask me to play the piano?"

"You will reply that you know nothing by heart."

"And if they get some music?"

"You will say that you play only pieces written for sixteen pianists, no more, no less."

"And what will they say to that?"

"They can only say. . . . But time presses and the audience is getting restless."

"Oh goodness! I am afraid I would make a mistake, even though I would have nothing to do."

"You are, truly, much too modest, madam."

"Ah, well, if I agree, believe me, it is not for the vain pleasure of showing off before the crowd and receiving its applause, but only to please you and to help the poor."

"Madam, I kiss your hands."

And that kind lady then took her place at the piano beside a woman who, believing her an accomplished pianist, was not a little surprised at her silent playing. She did just as she was supposed to, and ran her hands over the keyboard with the rapidity of a swallow skimming the fields. But when a series of rests indicated that we all should stop for a moment, she continued to pretend to play alone, with a most laudable zeal. This caught the attention of a number of listeners, who were most astonished to see this pantomime without sound. To cut the story short, however, everything went off beautifully. The sixteen skillful pianists, including the one who did not play the piano at all, were called back at the end of the performance to receive the praises of the audience and to divide among themselves the bouquets enthusiastic young men had piled on the front of the stage. I have always thought that the obliging lady who thus sacrificed herself by feigning to play a part that another was really supposed to do, was not the one with the least right to public recognition. For my part, I am glad to repeat my thanks to her here.

I was received in Mobile with the same enthusiasm and the same curiosity as in all the other cities of the Union. It was there I had the rare honor of counting among my listeners a delegation of savages, and I learned later that they considered me a spirit descended from the world of harmony to instruct mankind, which I found extraordinarily flattering, as might well be imagined. Upon returning to their respective tribes they doubtless delighted their fellows by describing the marvels of my box which speaks amorously, for that is what they called my piano. . . . I will probably be long since forgotten by the palefaces of the great city of Paris--those great forgetters--when my box which speaks amorously will be still talkative and more amorous than ever in the memories of the redskins. This thought is consoling, since for the artist death is only an accident, while to be forgotten is the real death.

The University of Wisconsin
Grove City College

A FAREWELL TO ARMS: NOVEL INTO FILM

MORDECAI MARCUS

Most of the reviewers of the film version of A Farewell to Arms focussed their attention on the acting of Jennifer Jones and Rock Hudson. While noting how these actors' portrayals of Catherine Barkley and Frederic Henry depart from the spirit of Hemingway's novel, they also gave some attention to the changes in plot and the effect of these changes on the characterization. When examined closely, however, many of the changes in plot reveal not only how but why the essence of Hemingway's vision of life and war was excluded from the film.

The changes in Hemingway's story might not appear quite so remarkable were it not for a fascinating document by David O. Selznick, the film's producer, which appeared in Life for March 17, 1958. This article, consisting of numerous memoranda which Selznick exchanged with members of his production staff during the planning and shooting of the film, reveals either unconscious hypocrisy or well-nigh total misunderstanding of Hemingway's novel.

Many changes in the story were made to satisfy the Italian government so that the film could be shot in Italy. These changes, Selznick revealed, consist mainly of emphasizing Italian military victories and stressing the civilian rather than the military disaster of the retreat from Caporetto. Selznick does not, of course, reveal how these changes are related to many other changes, among which are the virtual abandonment of the priest-baiting, the toning down of the soldiers' anti-war sentiments, the elimination of the shooting of the cowardly sergeant, and most important, the change which makes Rinaldi accompany Frederic on the retreat from Caporetto and be shot by a firing squad for raving against the war and his own cowardice. In the original of this scene Frederic only watches the execution of officers who are separated from their troops, and then runs for his life. This new incident is quite obviously planned to give an added motivation to Frederic's desertion so that it will be comprehensible and acceptable to everyone--the Italian government included. One of the first things Frederic says to Catherine when justifying his desertion is that he has seen his friend shot unjustly.

In the face of this distortion of the plot, and the melodramatic rant about Rinaldi's sickness and his greatness as a surgeon which Frederic

shouts out to the court martial, Selznick writes to Ben Hecht--the script writer--that he is most anxious that the script show Frederic deserting because he is fed up with the brutality and madness of war, and not because he saw his friend shot down. Selznick refers over and over again to his respect for Hemingway and his desire to be faithful to the spirit of the story --"the unique qualities of Hemingway"--yet the script introduces a major change apparently designed to create a motivation which the producer later says must be avoided.

Similar purposes are visible in other changes in Hemingway's plot. The shooting of the cowardly sergeant is eliminated probably because it reveals more brutality than is proper for a hero and does not reflect on the glory of the Italian sergeants who run or of the men who help Frederic to kill one of them. The script, however, makes a substitution for this incident, which shows an awareness of the original scene's purpose. In the movie, the ambulance man Aymo struggles with and chokes to death a civilian who tries to steal a seat on the ambulance reserved for a woman carrying a baby. Strangely gratuitous as this scene appears, it is very probably intended to show one effect of the retreat--the cowardice of the uninitiate--which Hemingway ruthlessly punishes in one of the sergeants. The new scene, however, makes the death of a coward the result of ungallant action and of a struggle to the death.

The new characterization of the priest culminates in the plot change which shows his approaching death while he remains behind as the bombardment of Caporetto begins. This scene connects with two other changes made by the film, all of which add a distinct kind of distortion to the story. The priest's final act is designed to remind us that salvation and meaning may accompany death. The same theme is introduced again when Rinaldi, the unbeliever, kisses a crucifix before he is shot by the firing squad.

Although the makers of The Sun Also Rises were able to distort its conclusion by making a pious Tyrone Power inform Lady Brett that many people still have God, Selznick and Ben Hecht have not had the nerve or the ingenuity to suggest a reunion in heaven for Frederic and Catherine. They have, however, managed the next best thing. Hemingway's conclusion shows Frederic leaving the body of Catherine and walking out into the rain, a man defeated by fate, robbed of the only thing he values, doomed to wander through a dreary and empty world. In the film, however, as Frederic walks out, the rain has stopped, for the forboding rain of the novel, which is suggestive of the woe of life, has been converted into a symbol of Catherine's private apprehension of death.

As Frederic walks along the damp streets, he remembers scenes in which Catherine swore that only his love gave meaning to her life. The implication is that she has found fulfillment before her death and that he can always treasure the memory of her and her fulfillment. Since the conclusion strains toward an emotion irrelevant to those elements of Hemingway's

plot and theme which remain in the film, it achieves little sense of conviction or finality. All of this tends to make the plot meaningless rather than expressive of the intense love of life and accompanying sense of meaninglessness which are central to Hemingway's theme.

It is curious how well the changes apparently forced on Selznick contribute to the shaping of a popular movie, and one wonders what the outcome would have been had he sacrificed authentic decor and filmed the movie in California. It is ironic that the film version of For Whom the Bell Tolls, which displayed considerable power and faithfulness to the novel, was made in California (one could hardly do it in Franco Spain), whereas the distortions of A Farewell to Arms were apparently increased by its production in Italy--where the producer sought authentic background. It seems unlikely, however, that a film true to the spirit of Hemingway's novel could be made now, since it would be virtually certain to lose money and would run counter to the self-satisfied religiosity with which our culture is now so strenuously trying to ease its anxieties.

My memory of the Gary Cooper-Helen Hayes film version is too dim to permit comparison. I do recall, however, that the earlier film had Frederic and Catherine married by the priest. The new version disports a daring treatment of sex outside marriage, but its insensibility to Hemingway's values suggests that this thin sugar-coating of realism is another example of the self-deceptions of our age. Possibly more conscious is the deception visible when one compares the film's written prologue about Italy's glorious participation in the war with the passage in the novel in which Frederic reflects on the emptiness and obscenity of all rhetoric which praises war.

Purdue University

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REVIEWS

THE SOUTHERNER AS AMERICAN. Edited by Charles G. Sellers, Jr. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1960. \$5.00.

SOUTHERN TRADITION AND REGIONAL PROGRESS. By William H. Nicholls. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1960. \$5.00.

I regard these two little volumes by native Southern intellectuals as supporting the postulate that no one can understand a contemporary social problem without resorting to history. While social psychologists tell us that this present generation of Southerners is unable to provide an intelligent rationale for the principle of racial segregation, because that system violates liberal and Christian principles, historical investigation shows that the South has never been able to reconcile its social conscience with its treatment of the Negro. "The nub of the Southerner's ambivalent attitude toward slavery," writes Professor Sellers in The Southerner as American, "was his inability to regard the slave consistently as either person or property."

Both in 1860 and in 1960, Southerners betrayed schizophrenic tendencies with regard to the race question: first, they regarded the Negroes basically as a malleable and disciplined labor force, never forgetting the potential social chaos which might follow any alteration of the status quo; second, they recognized Negroes as individuals who were capable of responding favorably to the stimulus of humane, democratic, and Christian principles. Interestingly enough, the South's racial problem has been intensified because its intellectuals have traditionally articulated themselves concerning the first of these two viewpoints while at the same time keeping private their sentiments with regard to the second proposition. Logically, this gave rise to the vicious myth concerning the South's monolithic attitude in racial matters.

Although Southerners possess a healthy residue of Jeffersonian liberalism, observes Professor Nicholls in Southern Tradition and Regional Progress, they have not been able to view rationally the matter of race relations. This is the tragedy of the South because it is the race issue which "dominates all other elements of the picture." Violence is always at or near the surface of events, shutting off any serious attempt by the gadfly to get at

reality. As an economist, Professor Nicholls finds the roots of this dilemma in the historic fact of community-wide rural poverty, and the persistence of provincial traditions.

Although the lower-class white brings his racial prejudices to the city when he becomes a factory worker, it is the upper-middle and elite classes which bear the primary responsibility for community violence, or lack of it, in matters of public school integration. Traditionally, the Southern planter educated his children privately, regarding public schools as being for poor whites. Tax-supported public schools were a product of the much-despised Reconstruction era, dominated as it was by the carpetbagger, the white native scalawag, and their pliant tool, the Negro. Unfortunately, much of that Southern leadership today which proposes to avoid the integration problem by shutting down public schools and universities never had much respect for such institutions. The dominant classes seem willing to doom the lower-middle class whites, as well as the Negroes, to a lifetime of ignorance primarily because they are interested in a ready supply of cheap labor. They also find racial discrimination useful, as in the days of the Populist revolt in the eighteen-nineties, to drive a wedge between the poor whites and the poor Negroes, thus avoiding class conflicts between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Whenever the dominant minority supports law and order to the hilt in the matter of racial integration in public schools, resistance to it collapses early. When, however, those in responsible places publicly predict violence by the lower-class whites, that group always rises to the emergency.

Professor Nicholls concludes that cosmopolitan, liberal, and democratic values must supplant rural, conservative, and pseudo-aristocratic ones if the South is not to revert to a dreary replica of the eighteen-nineties when that society irrationally chose the values of feudalism, caste, and stasis.

However, it is my opinion that, unfortunately, problems are not solved merely because they must be solved if a group or a nation is to prosper, or even to survive. These authors have given a convincing demonstration, if this were needed, that Southerners can look at the racial problem dispassionately, but I am far from being assured that the majority of them will. Like God to the religious man, the irrational seems omnipresent to me.

Park College

C. Stanley Urban

AMERICA IN THE MODERN WORLD. By D. W. Brogan. Rutgers University Press. 1960. \$3.00.

Visiting Rutgers last year to present the lectures now published in this slender volume, Denis W. Brogan chatted over dinner one evening with faculty members. The conversation was going its dull academic way

until we began discussing the making of history. One of us happened to suggest that neither economics nor politics is as decisive in shaping history as art. This absurdity was too much for even the urbane Brogan. Thumping the table with his hand, he flashed out, "When will you young liberals learn that politics is serious!" The idea did not surprise us, but his vehemence did. The force of it charged the rest of the evening with an almost tangible excitement.

The trouble with America in the Modern World is that the explosion never comes. While the subject--American responsibility in the dangerous post-war era--is utterly important, and the writing delightfully lucid, often witty, a reader is likely to complete the book feeling that he has been treated too gently. He may be enlightened, but not compelled.

The themes of the five short chapters are not unfamiliar. In the opening chapter, aptly (and allusively) entitled "A World They Never Made," the professor from Cambridge notes the Americans' genuine pessimism as they perceive their destiny inextricably bound up with that of all mankind. Next he argues, persuasively, that we should not try to reproduce our political or economic system everywhere around the globe, but should make both systems work well at home. Chapter three, on the character of American life, has many themes, perhaps the chief one being that we have always tended to value the businessman too much, the politician too little, and that a better balance in our estimates of them would benefit us here and abroad. Brogan's pages on education contain many kind words for our public schools and colleges, but conclude that the great social aim of welding diverse peoples into American citizens ought now to be replaced by more purely intellectual aims. His final chapter carries a similar argument over into the fine and popular arts, where the author enumerates the many advantages of democratic attitudes toward culture, yet calls upon us to love excellence more than we do.

How easily we agree with everything Brogan says! When he observes that "the United States in 1945 stood rather on a pinnacle of material power than on a peak of political leadership," we murmur to ourselves, "Perceptive!" When he asks--this a year ago--"Who knows what will be the state or the status of the Congo a year from now?" we acknowledge his foresight. Or when he points out that American institutions have been losing prestige in foreign lands for several decades, or that in our struggle with the communists and the authoritarian nationalists we are "not absolutely certain to win," we solemnly nod assent.

If we doubt his suggestion that a resolve to protect China's freedom took Americans into the second world war, or that "Imperial Germany and Republican America had more in common than had the Third Reich and the United States," we recognize these as remarks made in passing. We are not shaken by his errors, any more than we exult at his truths.

Why does the book misfire? Partly, I think, because Brogan himself has treated some of these topics more lavishly, more brilliantly, before, most notably in The American Character and Politics in America. Partly also because so many great and good men have explored the same matters in the last ten of fifteen years--to name but a few luminaries, Reinhold Niebuhr on American optimism, Kennan on foreign policy, C. Wright Mills on our attitudes toward the business elite, Conant on education, and Kazin on culture and the arts.

We are left, indeed, with the vaguely uncomfortable feeling that the cook's timing is off, or that he has mixed up our order with someone else's. Instead of steak and potatoes, we are served with mutton on toast. In speaking of our "discontent and alarm," our "suspicion, apprehension, bewilderment" over our newly precarious position among nations, Brogan is addressing the Americans not of 1960, I think, but of 1950. He has undertaken the task of explaining to us, calmly and reasonably, how we came to share world responsibility and what we might do with it now, whereas we have in fact come to understand our new role, it seems to me, and in a dim way have begun to see how it should be played. The present temper of Americans is not so much anxious as reluctant. The fears that prompted the agonizing public trials of McCarthy's regime have given way to the apathies of a people too bemused by trivia and too comfortable to care very much.

In brief, America in the Modern World seems pointed toward a place we have just left. That is why we can value Brogan's opinions but not respond to his mood, why we find him admirable and yet strangely undisturbing. We listen for Voltaire but instead hear de Tocqueville.

Rutgers University

Daniel R. Weimer

THE END OF IDEOLOGY: On the Exhaustion of
Political Ideas in the Fifties. By Daniel Bell.
Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press. 1960. \$7.50.

In these 16 articles and essays, all written during the 1950's and published originally in places ranging from the Partisan Review, Commentary, Dissent and Encounter, to scholarly journals and books, we have an excellent example of a sociologist in the humanist, politically-aware tradition shedding light and, occasionally, heat on a variety of the day's important issues. About half of the chapters bear directly on the stated theme--the declining cohesion, influence, and pertinence of the lately-popular ideologies of Marxism, socialism, liberalism and conservatism, and the growth of pessimistic, perhaps nihilistic, views of contemporary life and politics. The remaining chapters are short, sharp discourses on such largely-unrelated topics as "the myth of crime waves," "the cult of efficiency in America," and "the racket-ridden longshoremen." All in all, the book is a first-

rate introduction to a set of critical, even radical, ideas about which every student and teacher of American and Social Studies should know and think more.

University of Saskatchewan

Arthur Jordan Field

THE END OF AMERICAN INNOCENCE: The First Years of Our Own Time, 1912-1917. By Henry F. May. New York: Knopf. 1959. \$5.75.

May's thesis is that the cultural revolution of the twentieth century, which rejected the moralism, the belief in progress, and the traditional characteristics of the American past, began in 1912 and continued through the 1920's. May argues that the rebellious tendencies generally associated with the 1920's were operative in the 1912-1917 period. This argument emphasizes ideological changes in tradition and rejects, as the primary cause of the cultural revolution, the socio-economic changes wrought by World War One. The author's major difficulty is his attempt to pinpoint the beginnings of the revolution to one year, 1912. May's research is impressive, his presentation skillful and provocative.

University of Michigan

Norton Mezvinsky

ORDEAL OF FAITH: The Crisis of Church-Going America, 1865-1900. By Francis F. Weisenburger. New York: Philosophical Library. 1959. \$6.00.

Professor Weisenburger has attempted a "synthesis of much widely scattered knowledge" concerning the religious lives of "hundreds" of late nineteenth century Americans. Relying largely upon secondary sources, excluding, unfortunately, some of the best and most recent material, he details in encyclopedic fashion the manner in which an increasingly secular, scientific, and urbanized world affected the religious beliefs of numerous Americans.

There is, however, very little "synthesis." Short paragraphs are devoted to unrelated incidents in the lives of many important and unimportant figures, with little attempt at analysis or integration of these incidents into the total picture of American religious life in the years 1865-1900. One wonders, for example, how valuable it is to tell us that Eugene Debs reacted against Catholicism as a youth but was much influenced by the life of Jesus, illustrating this influence by the statement that Debs hung a large picture of Jesus in his cell while in prison during World War I.

In short, although the researcher might find in this volume bits of extraneous information concerning the religious lives of many prominent

Americans, a history of the "crisis of church-going America" in the years 1865-1900 has yet to be written.

Colgate University

Kenneth B. O'Brien, Jr.

THE PEOPLE AND THE COURT: Judicial Review in a Democracy. By Charles L. Black, Jr. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1960. \$6.00.

This is a defense of judicial review, and an eloquent and persuasive one at that. Not a technical treatise, the book argues the need for judicial review as a part of the system of checks and balances on essentially logical grounds. As a reply to those who would curb the Court by legislation or amendment, it is convincing. On the issue of judicial self-restraint, the author, Henry R. Luce, Professor of Jurisprudence at Yale, focuses his attack on J. B. Thayer but meets neither Holmes nor Stone nor Charles P. Curtis. The latter's Lions Under the Throne would, indeed, make a good companion volume to the book under review. Together, they would provide a remarkably balanced introduction for the intelligent layman to the most baffling, yet most crucial aspects of our constitutional system.

The University of Kansas

Francis H. Heller

THE FEDERALIST. By Gottfried Dietze. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1960. \$6.50.

Every generation, both at home and abroad, has praised The Federalist. Few scholars have written about it. Professor Dietze's work is the first full-length book about the famous essays. Dietze not only makes a strong case for The Federalist as a powerful exposition on free government, but he also distinguishes carefully between the authors' views. Madison, for example, saw federalism as a means for creating a system of power balances, thereby furthering republicanism where factions were inevitable. Hamilton valued the centralizing tendencies provided in the Constitution's "supreme law" and "necessary and proper" clauses. Dietze has an hypothesis; he supports it systematically and with substantial evidence; his conclusions are both cogent and provocative.

Ohio University

Roy P. Fairfield

ALEXANDER HAMILTON: Portrait in Paradox.
By John C. Miller. New York: Harper &
Brothers. 1959.

Students and teachers of American culture have for some time discerned a polarization in political and economic values between two giants of the early republic, Hamilton and Jefferson. Following the lead of Jefferson in his Anas reminiscences, and the scholarly formulations of Beard and Parrington, the textbooks now reveal how Hamilton's system favored aristocratic government and special privileges for the merchant-capitalists, while Jefferson advocated democratic and agrarian policies. This scheme has rewarded us with a sharper picture of Jefferson than, say, scholars of Henry Adams' generation provided, but it has depersonalized Hamilton into a symbol of class favoritism.

Some years ago Broadus Mitchell challenged all this with a new point of view developed out of his economic studies of the New Deal. (Alexander Hamilton: Youth to Maturity, 1755-1788 [New York, 1957].) Acknowledging Hamilton's aristocratic and paternalistic attitude, Mitchell nonetheless found the essence of the man's politics to lie in his extraordinary grasp of economic necessities, and in his energetic devotion to economic planning, aimed, not simply to benefit a privileged group, but to expand and enrich an entire nation. This is the view of a learned and hard-headed economist who, though appreciating the liberal sentiments of the Jeffersonian school, will not permit sentiment to obscure what he persuasively offers as economic realities.

Though Mitchell appreciates the quirks of Hamilton's personality, his preoccupation with public affairs causes him to minimize them. For this reason, the new biography by John C. Miller is of the highest value. Miller reveals Hamilton as an ambitious social climber, but, even more, a romantic pursuer of the goddess Fame, chasing his destiny (and herein lies the paradox) by means alternately rational and Quixotic. Here, at last, is a scheme which accounts for both the realistic economics of Hamilton and his enduring obsession with military adventures. It explains why Hamilton would eagerly create the means for raising fortunes in America in his role of great statesman, but would never take up the ample opportunities that came his way to amass a fortune for himself. And it explains why Hamilton would eagerly join the fight to free the United States from all ties with Great Britain in the 1770's and 1780's, only to turn about in the 1790's and work for a grand Anglo-American Empire in the Western Hemisphere, into which American independence must have been at least partially dissolved.

Both of these biographies, then, are required reading for students of the early Republic. Professor Mitchell makes a solid and challenging case for the famed Hamilton system of political economy, and Professor Miller

gives us, as no other biographer has, a living portrait of a brilliant man, by turns patriotic and selfish, noble and foolish, calculating and rhapsodic.

The University of Illinois

Robert McColley

THE CONFEDERATE CONGRESS. By Wilfred Buck Yearns. Athens, Ga.: The University of Georgia Press. 1960. \$5.00.

Professor Yearns portrays the Confederate Congress as an example of a legislature in time of war. At first the members of Congress accepted the emergency and yielded to the leadership of President Davis, but as life in the Confederacy became more difficult so did Congress, with the development of a real opposition party clearly in the offing had the war dragged on.

The treatment is topical rather than chronological. There is little of the human drama in this book; very few of the Congressmen are more than names. The volume contains a mass of information gleaned from a wide selection of sources, but there is a minimum of interpretation of the material. Brief biographical notes on Confederate Congressmen are included in an appendix.

Grove City College

Larry Gara

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND WENDELL WILKIE. By Donald Bruce Johnson. Urbana: University of Illinois, Press. 1960. \$5.50.

Vitality and independence were Wendell Willkie's hallmarks whether as a corporation lawyer, 1940 Presidential candidate, American goodwill emissary, or titular leader of the Republican party. His impact on the nation was great. In his unorthodox, relentless, often naive way, he contributed significantly to reshaping the Republican party, to bolstering American idealism on both international and domestic issues, and to giving support to and criticism of national defense and war measures. Professor Johnson has splendidly reconstructed Willkie's still controversial political career, though recently opened relevant manuscript materials indicate serious limitations in Johnson's portrayal of Republicanism in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

The University of Kansas

Donald R. McCoy

DIARY OF GIDEON WELLES: Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson. In three volumes. Edited by Howard K. Beale with the assistance of Alan W. Brownsword. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1960. \$25.00.

Ever since the publication of Gideon Welles' diary in 1911 scholars have wondered how closely the printed version resembled the original. The present edition, under the capable hand of the late Howard K. Beale, promises to end the controversy for all time.

Students of the Civil War and Reconstruction periods have been heavily indebted to the indefatigable Welles for information and enlightenment regarding the solution of problems that confronted the administration during these trying times. Almost every night the Secretary of the Navy sat down and recorded his impression of the day's events, illuminating his comments with pungent observations on the circumstances, the participants, and the outcome. Nothing escaped his scrutiny: military affairs, foreign policy, domestic problems, the intricacies of political and sectional disputes--all served as grist for his reportorial mill.

The editor, in an illuminating and perceptive introduction, points out that the Diary as originally written was not intended for publication, but that Welles continued to make corrections and additions and later evidently had publication in mind. Beale has performed a remarkable service for the historian and the curious reader, for he had included the Diary in its original form; the passages added, deleted, or modified by Gideon Welles and by his son, Edgar, in the 1911 edition; and correspondence which relates to certain entries. A detailed index provides an invaluable aid to the subject matter of the work, but most readers will be content to immerse themselves in a narrative that adds a different dimension to a troubled era in American history.

University of Kansas

Raymond G. O'Connor

THE TRUMPET SOUNDETH: William Jennings Bryan and His Democracy, 1896-1912. By Paul W. Glad. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1960. \$4.75.

Historians have long awaited a definitive biography of the boy orator of the Platte. Glad modestly disclaims an attempt to fill this gap, but he has provided the reader with a perceptive study of the political leader who represented agrarian dissatisfaction with the effects of industrialism.

Bryan is portrayed as a "Son of the Middle Border," whose political beliefs rested on the foundation of an "ethically conscious Protestantism." Profoundly moved by the plight of the under-privileged, Bryan felt that

social justice could be achieved only by allowing the people to be masters in their own house. Though Bryan never reached the White House, Glad contends that his influence was felt in the reform legislation of the Progressive era. The book ends with the emergence of Wilson as Democratic leader in 1912. Bryan, though rejected, could take pride in the knowledge that his principles had prevailed.

The University of Kansas

Raymond G. O'Connor

DE KOONING. By Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh.
New York: Grove Press, Inc. 1960. \$1.95.

STUART DAVIS. By Rudi Blesh. New York:
Grove Press, Inc. 1960. \$1.95.

Although these two books are in the Evergreen Gallery series of paperbacks devoted to contemporary painters and sculptors (both American and foreign), and despite the shared authorship of Rudi Blesh, they represent two rather different concepts in art history and criticism. Of the two, the one devoted to Stuart Davis is potentially the more interesting (and useful) for the student of American culture. The effective text and adequate illustrations review the life and work of an artist whose development reflects most of the salient episodes in the history of American art during the twentieth century. In contrast, De Kooning's rather important place in American art was secured less than ten years ago, and consequently the book devoted to him is, of necessity, largely interpretive criticism. Without disparaging the latter approach, one can't help but wonder at the relationship of these two books in a single series. De Kooning's reputation has been achieved in part by his work, but also by numerous publications such as the one considered here; Davis' reputation, earned long ago, has been the justification for this publication. One cannot help but see this difference in the "meatier" text of Stuart Davis.

The University of Kansas City

George Ehrlich

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: Writings and Buildings. Selected by Edgar Kaufmann and Ben Raeburn. New York: Horizon Press. 1960.
\$3.95. Paper, \$1.95.

This is a handy, inexpensive source book on the American artist who has enjoyed the greatest esteem abroad. There are helpful introductory notes by the editors, a United States map showing location of his buildings, and a definitive listing of the executed works throughout the world. The body of the work is excerpts from Wright's own published works which carry the reader through the development of Wright's architectural ideas.

There are more than 150 offset illustrations of drawings and photographs of executed buildings. The writings where he philosophizes suggest counterparts in American transcendental thought, but work notes on such a project as Unity Church in Oak Park are the most exciting of all. Such writing and the buildings which resulted show the artist as the critic of society.

University of Kansas City

KJLaB

**PSYCHOANALYSIS AND AMERICAN LITER-
ARY CRITICISM:** By Louis Fraiberg. Detroit:
Wayne University Press. 1960. \$5.95.

The reader who struggles through a murky presentation of Freud's writings on art and the extensions thereof by Ernest Jones, Hanns Sachs, and Ernest Kris, finds that the author has used this material as grounds for scolding Brooks, Krutch, Lewisohn, Wilson, Burke, and Trilling for not having embraced Freudianism as completely as has he and for their lack of proficiency in the latest Freudian categories. Trilling comes off best of his fellow critics, but Fraiberg's heart really belongs to Marie Bonaparte. While too frequently guilty of narrowly regarding terminology and methodology as ends in themselves, Fraiberg occasionally offers a glimpse of the profundity and freedom psychoanalysis can provide for the exercise of one's individuality in every area of expression, including literary criticism.

Newark College of Engineering

Abraham H. Steinberg

EDGAR A. POE: The Inner Pattern. By
David M. Rein. New York: Philosophical
Library. 1960. \$3.75.

It has been a long time since Marie Bonaparte and Joseph Wood Krutch published their psychoanalytical studies of Poe. This sort of thing has gone out of fashion, and readers are too likely to be suspicious. But despite numerous shortcomings, this is a valuable little book. The patterns which the author sees are really there; there are parallels between Poe's tales and his biography.

Perhaps by design, the author makes no effort at critical evaluation. His failure to make use of the extensive body of critical and scholarly work on Poe, however, is a real deficiency. There are in print discussions of topics important for Mr. Rein's argument; he should have used them. Moreover, despite its brevity, this is a repetitious work; the same incidents are related again and again; the same documents quoted and requoted. Worse, the book's baldness will alienate many readers. The psychological and biographical patterns which the author detects are too often presented

in foolish-sounding statements such as this, from the discussion of "Metzengerstein": "Like the horse, Allan was of a rival family."

SGL

EDITH WHARTON: *Convention and Morality in the Work of a Novelist*. By Marilyn Jones Lyde. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1959. \$4.00.

This bold yet carefully-reasoned interpretation successfully questions the usual view of Edith Wharton as a novelist primarily absorbed in the intricacies of manners and social class. The author sees Mrs. Wharton's greatest work as the product of a complex theory of morality, rooted in early intellectual influences, which located the supreme good in a fusion of belief, beauty and truth. Elaborating on this theory, the author makes clear the important distinction between morality and convention as they operate both to oppose and to reinforce each other in Mrs. Wharton's work. The decline in the quality of the novels written after World War I is ascribed to the weakening of traditional concepts of morality and the consequent irrelevance of Mrs. Wharton's concern with the effect of convention on character.

Barnard College

Annette K. Baxter

HAMLIN GARLAND'S EARLY WORK AND CAREER. By Donald Pizer. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press. 1960. \$4.50.

Resurgent interest in American Realism has uncovered rich veins of cultural gold but has by-passed many significant lodes. Mr. Pizer partially remedies one oversight by this analysis of ideological forces which shaped and directed the literary production of Hamlin Garland. The most original contribution lies in the treatment of Garland's local-color realism. As practice and as critical theory, it paralleled that of William Dean Howells. However, the American Studies scholar will find significance in the discussions of Garland's association with and furtherance of Single Tax, Populism, and Impressionism, all of intense interest to him, personally and professionally. The carefully prepared notes and bibliography suggest further potential areas for development.

Bowling Green State University

Alma J. Payne

A GUIDE TO ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPTS
IN THE UNITED STATES. Compiled for the
National Historical Publications Commission.
Philip M. Hamer, Editor. New Haven: Yale
University Press. 1961. \$12.50.

Need to locate a book or journal in an American library? Librarians have done pretty well by you with the National Union Catalog (beginning to appear currently in book form) and the Union List of Serials (now being readied for a third edition). But just try to run down some manuscripts (other than a medieval one). The French and Italians have long had their great national inventories of manuscripts, and the British their reports and calendars of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. We tried of course under the Historical Records Survey, but prosperity thwarted that. Finally, however, we're at it full tilt. Two years ago, after a decade of planning, the Library of Congress began the slow and major task of printing cards from cooperatively produced copy toward a full-scale National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, which may one day appear also in book form. Due very shortly from the University of Texas Press is a checklist of holdings of American literary manuscripts, a long-time project of the MLA American Literature Group. And here at hand already is Hamer's introductory guide to collections of all sorts of manuscripts--ancient or modern, on clay cylinders, vellum or paper--in some 1300 American depositories: concise, up-to-date, legible, deeply indexed, and of impeccable pedigree. Its shortcomings are modest. Use it as a first tool, but remember that work with manuscripts will always require some Holmesian sleuthing.

The University of Kansas

Robert Vosper

THE JUNGLE. By Upton Sinclair. New
York: Signet Classics. 1960. \$0.50.

A handy new paperback edition. The "Afterword" by Robert B. Downs sets the novel in historical context.

SGL

FOLKWAYS: A Study of the Sociological
Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs[,]
Mores, and Morals. By William Graham
Sumner. New York: Mentor Books. 1960.
\$0.75.

Useful new paperback edition.

SGL

